MARVEL MASTERWORKS®

THE MIGHTY THOR®

VOLUME 18

THE MIGHTY THOR Nos. 279-290
& ANNUAL Nos. 7-8
ROY THOMAS, JOHN BUSCEMA & KEITH POLLARD
WITH WALTER SIMONSON

MARVEL

MARVEL MASTERWORKS

PRESENTS

THE MIGHTY THOR

VOLUME 18

COLLECTING

THE MIGHTY THOR Nos. 279-290

& ANNUAL Nos. 7-8

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WITH WALTER SIMONSON

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NOS. 279-290 & ANNUAL NOS. 7-8

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INTRODUCTION
BY ROY THOMAS

Thor and the Eternals—what Marvel combination could've been more of a natural?

And yet it took a while to happen.

When Jack Kirby returned to Marvel in 1975 as a writer/editor/artist, his most eagerly anticipated new title was *The Eternals,* seen by many as his Marvel answer to his own recent *New Gods* series for DC. The latter, in turn, had been an unacknowledged follow-up to the *Thor* series he'd drawn and co-plotted for years with scripter/editor Stan Lee.

However, despite the fact that crossovers were Marvel's lifeblood, Jack preferred to keep his Eternals in what seemed to be a separate "universe" all his own, not intermingling with any of the other Marvel heroes who might logically have appeared therein. (Well, who am I to judge? After all, for all of the '70s, I hadn't let *Conan the Barbarian,* a comics series I'd developed, cross over with any Marvel super heroes. Of course, the Eternals were much closer to being bona fide super heroes than Robert E. Howard's Cimmerian creation.)

When Jack departed Marvel a second time in the late '70s, though, the powers-that-were at Marvel and I agreed that now nothing stood in the way of fully integrating the Eternals, the Celestials, the Deviants, the Mutates and the whole magnificent megillah from that series into the Marvel Universe. While in an earlier day such a melding might've been more likely to take place in *Fantastic Four,* certainly *Thor* made sense as the venue.

I started the process with 1978's *Thor Annual* #7. Young Walt Simonson became its penciler. Nobody—not even Walt himself—knew that a few years hence he'd write and draw a powerful sequence of *Thor* issues that would stand as a high point of the series after the glory days of Stan and Jack. But even in '78 he gave full body to the Eternals-featuring synopsis I handed him. Ernie Chan inked the annual, so—with no fault attaching to Ernie—less of the emerging Simonson style shone through, but it was still a masterful performance.

My concept was that, a thousand years ago, Thor had encountered a trio of Eternals. This let me begin to work out one of the thornier aspects of Kirby's newest creation: namely, that its godlike beings were near-parallels to the gods of Mount Olympus in Graeco-Roman myth. It had been lost on no one—nor had Jack meant it to be—that Zuras, Thena and Makkari were dopplegängers of Zeus, Athena and Mercury (the Roman version of Hermes). How the problem was solved—well, read this book. Suffice it to say it became an origin story for Ikaris—the most prominent hero in the *Eternals* comic, his name derived from the ill-fated Greek-mythological Icarus, actually a foolish ninny who flew too close to the sun using artificial wings built by his inventor father.

After the *Annual*, there would be one or two intervening monthly issues before I got back to the Eternals storyline.

First off, with Alan Kupperberg and Pablo Marcos as guest artists, I came up with a story involving Jane Foster, once Thor's beloved but now deprived of even a memory of their romance. It was like a trip down memory lane, with Pluto, Loki and the malevolent troll Ulik along for the ride.

After that, I did another story I'd been wanting to do for a while. I always felt Marvel's Thor was,

at least in terms of powers and his place in the pantheon, more or less the equal of DC's Superman; there was also perhaps a slight nod to the latter in the two versions of Hyperion that I'd conceived earlier in *The Avengers*—the first, a member of the evil Squadron Sinister; the second, a part of the nobler but visually identical Squadron Supreme. So what could be more fitting than that Thor and Hyperion—the baddie version, anyway—would tangle?

I hired my science-fiction/comics-fan friends Don and Maggie Thompson to write a synopsis from my notes. (Why the assist? Well, having moved to L.A. in '76, I was making the rounds of various TV production companies, with my Hollywood agent in tow, seeking to sell a few series concepts, with myself attached as writer, and I needed to spend a bit less time on comics. Still, since the story in *Thor* #279 was my idea and I'd scribe the actual dialogue, it was essentially my yarn.)

Because John Buscema had to be briefly spelled as penciler after the end of our recent Ragnarok retelling (see the previous *Masterworks* volume), for this issue I chose as artist one of the field's early giants. Wayne Boring had been only the second or maybe third person ever to draw Superman, back around 1939—so it appealed to my sense of mischief to have him draw this Thor/Hyperion encounter. With Tom Palmer inking, I knew the issue would look sensational.

I utilized *both* Hyperions in the story—the good and bad—but the emphasis was on the latter. I've always liked the look of Hyperion, one of the relatively few super-doers I designed visually as well as verbally. Nowadays, he sports a totally different outfit, and I'll admit I wince whenever I see it… but hey, everybody's entitled to a change of clothes now and then, right?

At this point, for reasons I don't recall, my *Thor* tenure got interrupted for two issues, before I could return to the Eternals. Marvel editors Mark Gruenwald and Ralph Macchio teamed up for a tale that brought back the Space Phantom (from *Avengers* #2) and a Frost Giant lookalike called Tempus, who messed with time. In fact, while the two-parter (penciled by rising star Keith Pollard and inked by Pablo Marcos) had all the twists and turns you might expect of a yarn written by two guys who loved to tie up the loose ends of Marvel continuity as much as I did, I'd like to point out some Thor dialogue at the end of #282: "I am gnawed by the notion that this was all a contrivance to cleave mine hammer of its time-spanning might!" Since the thunder god's mighty mallet Mjolnir indeed lost its ability to travel through time after this story, maybe that was Mark and Ralph's way of cluing the reader in as to precisely what they'd been up to.

Anyway, with *Thor* #283, I was back—picking up the Eternals story arc with a vengeance where the *Annual* had left off. The story begins with something relatively unusual for U.S. comics in that era—bank robbers speaking in untranslated Spanish. I got someone to translate my English dialogue. Naturally, that scene wasn't meant to cast any aspersions on Hispanics; quite the contrary, I felt people of different ethnic backgrounds should be able to fill any role in a comic book, from super hero to bank robbers.

But the meat of the story was Thor's encounter with the Celestials, those towering beings who made Galactus look like one of Snow White's Seven Dwarfs. (Well, maybe not quite.) The recent Annual had mostly been well received, but there were a few souls out there who felt the Eternals should be kept forever separate from the Marvel Universe. Then editor-in-chief Jim Shooter and I forcefully disagreed with that viewpoint. I also incorporated into the storyline some suggestions from the aforementioned Gruenwald and Macchio—both of whom as fans had once disapproved of bringing the Eternals into the Marvel Universe! Well, we all change our minds from time to time.

With #284 we rung in Dr. Daniel Damian and Ajak (read: Ajax), an Eternal who hadn't been seen much since the first two issues of Kirby's *Eternals.* If we were finally going to have the worlds of

Marvel and Eternals collide, we'd start at the beginning and see where it led us. I also enjoying working with Sersi, clearly Jack's version of Circe, the witch who, in Homer's *Odyssey,* changed Odysseus' overeager sailors into pigs.

While I'd been somewhat enthusiastic about the *Eternals* series from its outset under Kirby, working with the characters over the course of this multi-issue epic made me appreciate them even more. But then, I hardly needed convincing as to Jack Kirby's credentials as a comics creator. When I was six years old during the post-World War II period, I'd loved the offbeat super hero *Stuntman,* launched by Jack and his then-partner Joe Simon. Seeing the "Simon & Kirby" byline on a story always meant to me that it was worth reading… I'd felt the same way in the 1960s about "Lee & Kirby." And while I wasn't always the biggest fan of Kirby's precise plotting and dialogue, I yield to few in my feeling that he's one of the great conceptualizers in the history of popular culture.

But anyway, back to the comic books:

One of the *Eternals*-related characters I liked best, especially visually, was the big red Karkas, one of the ever-delightful Deviants, whom I made a focus of #285. Kirby had devoted an *Eternals Annual* to him and one or two cohorts, and I could see his appeal to his creator. I should point out that, especially in the early issues of this Eternals-related storyline, I made a conscious effort not to introduce *new* characters into this Kirby-derived corner of the Marvel Universe. Sure, I'd have loved to make up guys to hang around with Dromedan, Druig, Valkin and the like, but I feared that'd just muddy the waters. What I wanted to do, remember, was to integrate the Marvel and Kirby/Marvel spheres, and I felt it best I did so without adding appreciably to the mix.

With #286, Buscema left the *Thor* book for a while, and the able young Keith Pollard took his place, with Chic Stone inking. I'd given Thor two companions I enjoyed writing: the fierce Karkas and the ever-sensual Sersi. I also brought in the warlord Kro and the mysterious, youthful Deviant known as Reject. The mini-universe of the Eternals was so complex and highly populated that I had to move slowly, introducing a few heroes here, a few villains there.

With #287 I brought the above grouping (minus Kro) to Olympia—the Eternals' domain, not to be confused (though I'm sure it occasionally *was*) with Olympus, home of the Marvel Universe's Zeus, Hercules, et al. There was no getting around it—we'd have to take the bull by the horns if we were gonna straighten out a cosmos that had both an Olympus *and* an Olympia in it! I'm not sure we ever truly did—but Zuras knows, we tried!

This issue also brought in, from the Kirby series, the silver-plated entity the Forgotten One—the Eternals' equivalent of Hercules or maybe Gilgamesh, soon destined to be known as Hero. Though why he'd been "forgotten"… well, frankly, I forget. His battle with Thor carried over into #288. At this point, various Asgardians and their ilk began to creep back into the storyline as well, to signal that the collision of the two universes was imminent. Karnilla…Odin…Mimir… They were back, but now they had to compete with a whole new mock pantheon.

Did I mention that the spur of this story arc was the so-called "50-Year Judgment of the Celestials"? They'd come to Earth eons ago to decide its fate, and Odin had forbidden Thor to interfere. So when, in #287, Thor saw his All-Father bending the knee to Arishem, "leader of the Celestials on Earth," he reasoned that Odin was either "in league with [the Celestials]—or else their basest slave!"

We now had *three* groups of more-or-less immortals—from Asgard, Olympus, and Olympia—and it was hard to guess who was going to team up with whom against whatever. Through all the chaos

and confusion and cacophony, Keith P. ploughed ahead relentlessly and skillfully, making the pictures as clear-cut as the story was not allowed to be.

With *Thor* #290, I finally brought a new character into the Marvel "Kirbyverse"—El Toro Rojo (Spanish for "the Red Bull"), a Deviant who doubled as a masked wrestler. The latter category had interested me ever since I'd spent a month in Mexico in 1964 and seen the various Spanish-language photo/comic books featuring real masked wrestlers (e.g., silver-masked Santo, who also starred in action movies) and created-for-comics masked-wrestler types (like Neutron, basically a black-costumed Santo). Those guys were ubiquitous and super-popular in Mexico, so I incorporated them into this saga, as the basic inspiration for #290's "Ring Around the Red Bull," which also featured fang-toothed wrestlers El Vampiro and El Halcon d'Oro (Hawk of Gold); the latter were Olympians, while El Toro Rojo was a Deviant (I *think* I've got that straight—if not, you let me know, hear?). That issue was ably penciled by a pal of Keith's, Arvell Jones. Both Keith and Arvell were heavily influenced by Jack Kirby's work, so they were both a natural fit for this storyline.

After that digression, it was back to Olympia (not Olympus) to stop Zuras from pitting Eternals against Celestials and maybe destroying Earth in the crossfire. The blurb at the end of #290 said it all: "Next: ZURAS, ZEUS, AND ALL-FATHER ODIN--AGAINST THOR ALONE!"

But before I got to that, I had to take care of 1979's *Thor Annual*—which had nothing whatsoever to do with the battle between the pantheons—well, at least not with the Eternals and the Asgardians.

Thor Annual #8 dealt with the gods of Olympus—and the Trojan War.

I've often stated my favorite work of literature is Homer's *Iliad.* Plus, I'd been less than thrilled, a couple of years earlier, when Marvel had introduced a whole line of comics adapting classic works of literature, and I wasn't invited to write any of them, let alone my beloved *Iliad.* Besides, I felt the only artist then at Marvel who should do an adaptation of that work was John Buscema—so I decided that, if Marvel's classics wouldn't come to Roy, then Roy would go to the classics. The result: inserting the thunder god into the war between the Achaeans (Greeks) and the Trojans.

Still dividing my time between comics and Hollywood, I prevailed on Don and Maggie Thompson, again, to plot the story for me from my notes. I didn't want Thor to intervene materially in such a familiar story, so I settled for having the Greek warrior Diomedes at one point assume Thor is the god Apollo… while Thor purposely stood in once for Aeneas, an ally of the Trojans. In the end, I even had Loki play a part in the war's fabled climactic moment… You'll see.

In the final panel, I wrote that, in next year's Annual, a sequel to this one, Thor would be involved in the story of Aeneas (i.e., the Roman epic *The Aeneid*). However, I didn't wind up writing the 1981 *Thor Annual*—perhaps because, around that time, I chose to depart Marvel for a time. So the part the son of Odin played in the poet Vergil's epic about the founding of Rome has remained untold.

Between Annuals, though, there would still be a bit more of the Thor/Eternals yarn to be related… plus another major story arc that would carry the series up to its 300th issue. But that's a saga for our next volume….

2019

Roy Thomas has been a writer and editor in the comics field since 1965, far more often for Marvel than for any other company.

THOR ANNUAL

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THOR

IT'S NORSE THUNDER GOD VS. INCA THUNDER GOD --TO THE DEATH!

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GO THOU, HERMOD-- ON THE BACK OF EIGHT-HOOVED SLEIPNIR-- AND LEARN WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SPARE THE LIFE OF THE FATALLY-WOUNDED BALDER!

I SHALL RETURN FROM HELA'S LAND WITH GOOD TIDINGS, ALL-FATHER ODIN--

--OR THOU SHALL SEE ME NEVERMORE!*

*OUR OPENING SCENE IS ADAPTED FROM THE MIDDLE OF THOR #275... JUST TO LET YOU KNOW WHEN IT OCCURS. THE REST--AND BEST-- BE YET TO COME! --Roy.

ROY THOMAS * WALT SIMONSON & ERNIE CHAN
WRITER/EDITOR * ILLUSTRATORS

GLYNIS WEIN colorist
TOM ORZECHOWSKI letterer

JIM SHOOTER CONSULTING EDITOR

THEN, FOLLOWING ODIN'S **ADMONITION** TO THE ASGARDIANS TO GIRD THEIR LOINS FOR **WAR** WITH THE FORCES OF **DARRNESS**...

THOR, BELOVED-- IS IT *TRUE*, WHAT THE ALL-FATHER HATH SAID?

IS **DOOMSDAY** AT LAST *UPON* US?

I KNOW NO MORE THAN *THEE*, MILADY SIF.

STRANGE! THOUGH THOU AND I BE ***GODLINGS BORN***, WE CAN SEE THE ***FUTURE*** NO MORE CLEARLY THAN DO THE ***MORTALS*** WHO CRAWL THE EARTH BELOW!

NOR DO WE KNOW IF, IN SOOTH, ***EARTH'S FATE*** BE TIED TO ***ASGARD'S OWN.***

OUR ***LEGENDS*** E'ER HAVE ***HELD*** SO, AND YET--

MAY LOKI BE DAMNED! THIS BE ALL ***HIS*** INFERNAL DOING!

"I CANNOT ***PROVE*** THAT 'TWAS LOKI WHO SOMEHOW INDUCED BRAVE ***BALDER*** TO TEST HIS BELIEF THAT ***NO WEAPON*** IN ALL THE REALM COULD ***HARM*** HIM.

"YET, '***TWAS*** HE AND NONE OTHER WHO GAVE AN ***ARROW OF MISTLETOE*** TO THE BLIND ARCHER-GOD ***HODER***--

"--AN ARROW WHICH, FORMED OF A LIVING THING WHICH HAD ***NOT*** VOWED NE'ER TO HARM BALDER, LODGED WITHIN HIS IMMORTAL ***HEART!***

AND BE-CAUSE OF THAT ACTION MOST VILE--

--THE DAY OF RAGNAROK MAY BE NEARLY UPON US ALL!

WOULD THAT THE ARROW HAD SLAIN LOKI INSTEAD!

MILORD--

WITH A SOUND LIKE MJOLNIR'S THUNDER ITSELF, THE HURLED CHAIR SPLINTERS ASUNDER AGAINST MARBLE PILLARS--

--AND ASGARD TREMBLES ...JUST A LITTLE.

THROOM!

YET, WHEN DUST AND DEBRIS CLEAR...

NAUGHT IS CHANGED.

THERE BE, MAYHAP, A TIME AND A PLACE FOR VIOLENCE...

YET, 'TIS NOT AMONG THE HALLOWED HALLS OF THE REALM ETERNAL.

FORGIVE ME, MILADY. I MUST BE ALONE A WHILE... TO THINK.

I UNDERSTAND, BELOVED.

AYE, SHE UNDERSTANDS, THOR MUSES...

THEN WHY DOES NOT HE?

"THE REALM ETERNAL," HE HAS CALLED IT.

BUT, IS IT TRULY SO WHEN BALDER'S DEATH CAN SEND IT CRASHING INTO RACK AND RUIN?

IT SEEMS TO THOR THAT HE HAS WANDERED AIMLESSLY.

NOW, HOWEVER, AS HE LOOKS UP...

... HE KNOWS SUDDENLY THAT HIS STEPS WERE **NOT** REALLY AIMLESS, AFTER ALL!

THUNDER GOD! WHY HAST THOU COME BEFORE **MIMIR,** FIERY GUARDIAN OF THE **WELL OF WISDOM?**

I HAVE TOLD DESPISED **ODIN,** AND NOW I SAY IT TO **THEE:**

WITH BALDER'S DEATH, **RAGNAROK** MUST SURELY FOLLOW-- WHICH WILL SPELL THE **DOOM OF THE GODS!**

SURELY, THE **END OF ASGARD** SHOULD BE EVENT ENOW TO KEEP THEE AND THY FELLOW GODS **OCCUPIED-- FOREVER!**

AYE, MIMIR-- AND I SENSE SURELY THAT THOU WILT ***REJOICE*** AT OUR FALL.

YET, TELL ME-- ***WHY*** DOST THOU SO ***DESPISE*** THE ALL-FATHER?

THOU WERT ***GLAD*** TO GIVE HIM SO ***LITTLE*** KNOW-LEDGE--

--AT THE COST OF AN ***EYE!***

THOU **KNOWEST** THE STORY, MASTER OF STORMS.*

BUT, BECAUSE I **CANNOT LIE,** WHENE'ER I DO SPEAK AT **ALL--**

--I SHALL RECOUNT IT ***AGAIN:***

*AS DO **YOU,** IF YOU READ **THOR #274.**

"IN TIME'S DAWN, ASGARD FOUGHT A WAR WITH THE **VANIR,** A TRIBE OF RIVAL GODS.

"DURING A TRUCE, **HOSTAGES** WERE EXCHANGED.

"I WAS ONE OF THOSE GIVEN BY ASGARD.

"YET, I WAS ***EXECUTED*** BY THE VANIR, FOR NO GOOD REASON--

"--AND MY LIVING, TALKING, TORTURED HEAD WAS SENT BACK TO ODIN.

IN THIS LIVING DEATH, I HAVE THE **POWER OF PROPHECY**... SO HE TURNED ME TO **FIRE**, AND MADE ME HIS **ADVISOR**.

BUT, **NO** ACT OF HIS COULD MAKE ME **LOATHE** HIM THE LESS--NOR **GLORY** LESS IN HIS **COMING DEATH!**

I KNOW THAT, AS HIS **SON**, I BEAR THY HATRED, AS WELL.

STILL, I WOULD ASK THEE IF *MIDGARD*-- THE PLANET *EARTH*-- BE DOOMED TO DIE *WITH ASGARD!*

WHAT DOTH IT MATTER TO **THEE?**

AFTER ALL, THY MORTAL GUISE OF **DR. DONALD BLAKE** BE ONLY A **SHELL**, NOT THY **TRUE** SELF.

WHEN **THOU** SHALT PERISH, IN **RAGNAROK**, WHAT MATTER IF **EARTH** LIVES OR DIES?

PERHAPS... BUT THERE BE SOME ***MYSTIC BOND***, WHICH EVEN I DO NOT FULLY UNDERSTAND, 'TWIXT ***MIDGARD*** AND ***THOR***.

OUR OWN ***LEGENDS*** SAY THAT, IF ASGARD FALLS, ***EARTH*** DIES ALSO--BUT, HOW CAN THAT ***BE?***

WHAT ***ETHEREAL CHAIN*** BINDS THE DESTINY OF ***ASGARD***, ON ITS UNWORLDLY PLANE, WITH THAT OF ***MIDGARD?***

I ***KNOW*** OUR LEGENDS, OF COURSE...

"... WHICH SAY OUR OWN ***FORE-BEARS*** CREATED EARTH, EONS AGO.

AND SO, 'TIS ***OURS!***

"STILL, DO NOT THE LEGENDS OF ***OLYMPUS***, AND OF MANY ***ANOTHER*** RACE OF GODS, SAY THE ***SAME?***

"WHILE MANY ON ***MIDGARD*** ITSELF SAY THERE WAS ***NO*** DIVINE CREATION, BUT ONLY A SLOW ***EVOLUTION*** WHICH SEPARATED MAN FROM THE ***BEASTS***.

I WOULD KNOW-- AND *NOW*-- THE *TRUTH* OF THESE MATTERS, AND *NOT* AT THE COST OF AN *EYE*--

--OR I SWEAR THAT I SHALL *DESTROY THY WELL* WITH MINE HAMMER, AND LEAVE THEE A *HOMELESS, DRIFTING SPIRIT!*

I FEAR THEE NOT-- BUT, FOR MINE OWN REASONS, I SHALL ANSWER THEE.

THOU, THOR, OF ALL THE GODS, SHOULDST KNOW HOW THE EARTH WILL TRULY END!

WHAT *MEANEST* THOU? IF THOU SPEAKEST NOT OF *RAGNAROK*, I KNOW *NOTHING* OF THE FUTURE.

Ah, BUT I HAD FORGOTTEN... THOU DOST NOT REMEMBER CERTAIN EVENTS WHICH BEFELL THEE, AN EARTHLY MILLENNIUM AGONE.

THY WORDS BE PASSING *STRANGE*, MIMIR.

WHAT IS IT I DO NOT REMEMBER?

I SHALL BEGIN, THUNDERER, WITH THINGS WHICH THOU WILT UNDOUBTEDLY RECALL...

*"...THAT DAY WHEN ASGARDIANS AND OLYMPIANS DID FACE EACH OTHER ON THE FIELD OF WAR-- AND EACH SIDE BELIEVED ITSELF TO BE THE UNDISPUTED VICTOR. *

"THOU DOST RECALL OF THAT DAY ONLY THY CHAGRIN AT FINDING OUT THAT THOU COULDST NOT EXPAND ASGARD'S BORDERS BY COMBAT--

"-- BECAUSE THE WORSHIPPERS OF THE OLYMPIAN GODS DID NOT BELIEVE IN THE GODS OF THE NORSE.

"ODIN EXPLAINED IT ALL TO THEE... ALL THAT HE DARED TELL, AT ANY RATE.

"BUT, THOU WERT YOUNGER THEN, AND HEADSTRONG.

"THUS, THOU DIDST BROOD ALONE, EVEN AS TODAY, IN THE MOUNTAINS NEAR ASGARD...

*IN THE CLASSIC *THOR ANNUAL* #5.--R.

"... UNABLE TO ACCEPT THEN, AS NOW, THAT THERE ARE SOME THINGS UNDER OR BESIDE THE STARS...

"... BEYOND EVEN THE POWER OF MIGHTY MJOLNIR TO CONQUER!

FRAK

"THOU DIDST RAGE AND RANT--YET, IN THE END, THOU DIDST ACCOMPLISH NAUGHT SAVE THINE OWN FRUSTRATION.

"AT LAST, THOU DIDST WHAT THOU HAST OFTEN DONE, IN TIMES OF INNER TROUBLE.

"THOU DIDST LEAVE THE GLEAMING REALM...

"... OUT PAST HEIMDALL, WARDER OF MANY-COLORED BIFROST.

"AND, WITHOUT THE EXPRESS COMMAND OF ODIN HIMSELF, NO ASGARDIAN WOULD DEIGN TO CHALLENGE THE PASSAGE OF THE GOD OF THUNDER.

"YET, IN THINE HEART WAS A THOUGHT WHICH WOULD HAVE ANGERED THY GRIM SIRE...

I AM *HEIR* TO THE THRONE OF ASGARD-- AND I WOULD *EXTEND* THE REALM THAT I SHALL ONE DAY *RULE*.

IF THE *ALL-FATHER* HATH NO STOMACH TO HELP ME, I SHALL DO SO *ALONE*--

--IN A PLACE FAR FROM *EITHER* ASGARD OR OLYMPUS!

HERE, IN THIS NAMELESS LAND SHALL I -- BY THE GOLDEN APPLES OF IDUN!

FREE ME, BEING FROM THE HEAVENS-- FREE ME--!

THAT VOICE -- CALLING TO ME FROM YONDER CAVE--!

A DOORWAY-- YET SEALED BY A MIGHTY HAND!

STILL, THE DRONING VOICE I HEARD HATH AROUSED MY CURIOSITY--

--AND NO DOORWAY MADE BY MAN OR GODS MAY KEEP OUT THE SCION OF ODIN!

RUNCH!

NOR MAY ANY MENACE THAT MAY LIE WITHIN BE SUCH THAT I CANNOT VANQUISH IT.

"THIS, OF COURSE, OCCURRED IN THE DAYS BEFORE ODIN DID TEACH YOU SUCH SMALL HUMILITY AS YOU NOW POSSESS...

"...MORE'S THE PITY!

FREE ME, WAYFARER-- AND GREAT SHALL BE YOUR REWARD!

BY THE MAW OF THE MIDGARD SERPENT!

SO SPEAKS DROMEDAN, MASTER OF MINDS AND MEN!

FREE ME-- AND ALL THESE THINGS SHALL BE YOURS--

WEALTH-- WOMEN-- AND WORLDS TO CONQUER!

ONLY FREE ME-- FREE ME--!

FREE MEEEEE

"FOR A MOMENT, THOU WERT SORELY TEMPTED--FOR HERE AT HAND MIGHT BE THE CONQUESTS OF WHICH A YOUTHFUL GOD MIGHT DREAM.

"THOU DIDST REACH OUT TO FREE THE MYSTERIOUS MUMMER...

"AND THEN--

I SAY THEE-- NAY!

"WITH THAT EFFORT OF WILL, THOU DIDST BREAK THE SPELL...

"...TO FEEL A GREAT BURDEN LIFTED FROM THY MIND!

THE VOICE THAT DID CALL TO ME WAS... UNSPEAKABLY EVIL--

--AND LIKEWISE, POSSESSED OF POWER BEYOND MEASURE!

I CANNOT HOPE TO RESIST FOR LONG ITS SIREN CALL--

FREE ME-- FREE ME--!

--SAVE BY RAISING ANEW THE WALL OF STONE 'TWIXT IT AND ME!

SLAM

"AND HERE, INDEED, WAS PERHAPS THE BEGINNING OF THAT WISDOM WHICH MEN CALL HUMILITY...

"TOO BAD THOU DIDST FORGET SO SOON!"

"THOU SPEAKEST FICTIONS," SAYS THOR. "THIS NE'ER HAPPENED TO ME!"

"DID IT NOT?" SNEERS FIERY MIMIR...

"THEN WHAT OF THIS?

AH! A TRIBE OF SAVAGES! GOOD!

THEY SHALL REVERE ME AS A GOD.

THUS SHALL I EXTEND MINE EMPIRE!

"THE PRIMITIVES, HOWEVER, HAD RATHER DIFFERENT IDEAS...

"... THOUGH THEIR SWIFTEST ARROWS WERE UNAVAILING 'GAINST THE WHIRLING HURRICANE CREATED BY THEE AND MJOLNIR.

"AND, WHEN THEY RESORTED AT LAST TO THE BRUTE FORCE WHICH HATH EVER BEEN THE LAST RESORT OF MEN, THEN AS NOW...

"... THEY FOUND THE STORM WITHIN THE MAN-GOD E'EN MIGHTIER THAN THE HURRICANE WITHIN THE HAMMER!

"YET, YOU WERE SORELY **PUZZLED**...

WHAT **MADNESS** IS THIS? INSTEAD OF FALLING UPON THEIR KNEES, THE SAVAGES **REVILE** ME... AS IF I WERE **DEMON**, NOT GOD. THEY --

HOLD! THOSE **SHADOWS** O'ERHEAD--!

"AND THEN, YOU **SAW** THEM:

"A QUARTET OF **FIGURES**, ATTIRED AS COLORFULLY AS THYSELF--

"-- **FLYING** ABOVE, AS E'EN **THOU** HADST NEVER FLOWN, WITHOUT THE AID OF **MJOLNIR**.

"**ONE** OF THEM, LEAVING HIS FELLOWS, SWOOPED **DOWN** AT THEE, AS IF FROM OUT OF THE **SUN** ITSELF--

"--TO **HURL** HIMSELF AT THEE WITH THE FORCE OF THINE OWN **THUNDERBOLTS!**

UHH!

"THOU DIDST KNOW AT ONCE 'TWAS NO **ORDINARY MORTAL** STRUCK THEE --

"BUT, E'EN SO, WHEN THE GRIM-FACED STRANGER DID GRASP THY TENSED **WRIST**--

"-- **HIS** SHOCK WAS EVEN GREATER THAN **THINE** HAD BEEN!

NO MAN OR IMMORTAL LAYS HANDS WITH IMPUNITY UPON THE MIGHTY *THOR!*

ACCK!

VIRAKO, MY BROTHER! DO YOU SEE WHAT THE STRANGELY-GARBED INTRUDER HAS DONE TO DRUIG?

I FEAR, VALKIN, YOUR SON DESERVED NO LESS, FOR ATTACKING SO RASHLY.

STILL, I SUPPOSE WE MUST--

NO, VIRAKO! IT SHALL BE AJAK WHO WILL SHOW THE INTER-LOPER--

--THE POWER OF THE ETERNALS!

FROOM

"VERILY, THE SWOOPING FIGURE'S EYE-BLASTS DID SEND THEE HURTLING HEADLONG--

"YET, THOU DIDST JUST AS QUICKLY RECOVER...

FIRST THE CAVE-BEING... AND NOW THESE!

IS THIS UN-TAMED LAND A BREEDING-PLACE FOR GODS?

THRAKK!

WELL, WHATEVER THEY BE-- AND THOUGH THEIR POWERS BE FAR BEYOND THAT OF MERE MORTALS--

--'TWOULD SEEM THEY ARE STILL FAR LESS THAN THE EQUAL OF THE SON OF ODIN.

NOW, SPEAK, THOU WHO FIRST DID ATTACK ME--

--OR ELSE THOU WILT KNOW THAT MINE EARLIER BLOW WAS BUT A LOVETAP!

NO-- PLEASE! DON'T STRIKE ME AGAIN!

VIRAKO! GREAT VALKIN-- FATHER--!

YOU ALWAYS DID POSSESS RATHER LESS OF A *SPINE* THAN AN UNCLE COULD WISH, DRUIG.

WE CAN'T ALL BE *WARRIORS*, VIRAKO. DRUIG IS A *THINKER*.

A *PLOTTER*, YOU MEAN--BUT STILL AN *ETERNAL!*

THE MIGHTY *THOR* DOTH FEAR *NO* CREATURE WHICH FLIES OR CRAWLS!

RELEASE DRUIG, STRANGE ONE--OR PREPARE TO BATTLE THE *FOUR* OF US!

STILL, IF THESE TWO HAD NOT *PROVOKED* ME, I'D NOT HAVE LAID THEM LOW.

HE'S GOT A *POINT* THERE, MY BROTHER: AS YOU YOURSELF SAID, DRUIG ACTED *IMPETUOUSLY*.

ARE YOU *ALL RIGHT*, AJAK?

I--*THINK* SO...

WE WOULD *CONVERSE* WITH YOU, WAYFARER--BUT IT'S *NOT MEET* THAT WE TALK IN FRONT OF THESE *PRIMITIVES*, WHO WOULD NOT UNDERSTAND.

I *TOO* WOULD KNOW MORE OF *THEE*.

WHERE, THEN, SHALL WE FIVE MEET *AGAIN?*

I'D SUGGEST--ON ONE OF THE *TOWERING PEAKS* NEAR HERE.

IT ALWAYS *IMPRESSES* THE PRIMITIVES TO THINK THAT THEIR *GODS* DWELL ON *MOUNTAIN-TOPS*.

IF YOU'LL TAKE THE *HAND* OF ONE OF US, WE'LL *FLY* YOU THERE.

BY ODIN'S SACRED SPEAR *GUNGNIR!*

THOR *NEEDS NOT* THE POWER OF TRUE FLIGHT--NOT WHILST MYSTIC *MJOLNIR* BE E'ER AT HAND!

FOLLOW *ME*, THEN, IF YE *CAN!*

BY THE POLAR WINDS!

IT *SEEMS*, FELLOW ETERNALS, WE DEAL WITH A SORT OF BEING PREVIOUSLY *UNKNOWN* TO US.

SPEAKING FOR *MYSELF*, I WISH THEY HAD *STAYED* THAT WAY!

YOU ARE NEEDLESSLY *BITTER*, DRUIG.

NOW, YOU WHO TERM YOURSELF A *THUNDER GOD*-- WE WOULD KNOW IF YOU ARE A *DEVIANT*-- A *MUTATE*-- OR PERHAPS AN *OLYMPIAN ETERNAL* OF WHOM *ZURAS* HAS NOT INFORMED US.

DEVIANT? MUTATE? I KNOW *NOT* THE WORDS...

I AM *THOR*; THAT IS *ENOW*.

YET, THOU DIDST SPEAK OF *OLYMPIANS*.

BE YE SUBJECTS OF *ZEUS*, WHOM I HAVE MET *BEFORE?*

BY THE SPACE GODS! I THINK I'M STARTING TO *UNDERSTAND* SOME OF THIS!

YOU REALLY *ARE* ONE OF THIS PLANET'S *MYTHICAL GODS*, AREN'T YOU?

WE HAVE *MONITORED*, OF COURSE, THE *GRÆCO-ROMAN LEGENDS* OF ZEUS AND HERCULES AND ARES AND ALL THE REST--

--WHO DWELL, IN ONE SENSE, ON *MOUNT OLYMPUS*... YET AT THE SAME TIME IN *ANOTHER, PARALLEL WORLD* TO THIS ONE.

BUT, WE'VE ALWAYS ASSUMED THEY WERE ONLY *MYTHOLOGICAL*-- OR AT LEAST *NEVER INTRUDED* ON THIS PLANE.

NO, THE *OLYMPIANS* OF WHOM *I* SPOKE ARE THE *OLYMPIAN ETERNALS*--COMPOSED OF *ZURAS*, THE PRIME ONE--AS WELL AS *THENA, MAKKARI*, AND MANY OTHERS.*

THEY HAVE *NAMES* IN COMMON WITH THE GODS *YOU* MENTIONED--THOUGH, AS FAR AS I CAN TELL, *NEITHER* GROUP IS NAMED FOR THE *OTHER*.

IT'S A *MYSTERY*, SURE ENOUGH-- BUT ONE WE'VE NEVER HAD TIME NOR DESIRE TO *INVESTIGATE*.

*AS SEEN IN JACK KIRBY'S CLASSIC *ETERNALS* SERIES, 1976-77. -- Roy.

AYE, 'TIS A MYSTERY, FOR CERTAIN!

FOR, I AM A SCION OF *ASGARD*, WHICH WE DO CALL THE *REALM ETERNAL*...

YET, 'TIS OBVIOUSLY OF *NO RELATION* TO THINE OWN RACE OF "*ETERNALS*."

IF YE *BE NOT* GODS OF *OLYMPUS*, THEN WHO--?

PERHAPS.

WE ARE *POLAR ETERNALS*, THOR -- FROM BEYOND THE *NORTHERN REACHES* OF THIS PLANET, BEYOND THE REACH OF EVEN THE STALWART *VIKINGS* WHO WORSHIP YOU, HALF A WORLD AWAY.

LET ME *EXPLAIN* FURTHER; THEN PERHAPS YOU'LL *TRUST* US ENOUGH TO TELL US MORE OF *YOURSELF*.

COUNTLESS *EONS* AGO, A HOST OF *SPACE-GODS* VISITED THIS WORLD; THEY ARE CALLED THE *CELESTIALS*, AND THIS WAS THEIR *FIRST* VISITATION.

THIS *FIRST HOST* CONDUCTED EXPERIMENTS ON THE *APE-LIKE CREATURES* THEY FOUND HERE... AND FROM THEIR TESTS, *THREE EARTHLING RACES* WERE BORN:

THE SO-CALLED *HUMANS*,,, WE *ETERNALS*... AND A THIRD, MONSTROUSLY-EVIL RACE KNOWN AS *DEVIANTS*.

OVER A PERIOD OF *MILLENNIA*, THE SCHEMING *DEVIANTS* CAME VIRTUALLY TO *RULE* THE PLANET--

--TILL THEY DARED CHALLENGE EVEN THE *CELESTIALS* THEMSELVES, WHEN THE *SECOND HOST* OF SPACE-GODS RETURNED TO EARTH TO INSPECT THE *FRUITS* OF THEIR LABORS.

THEN, THEY *DEPARTED* A SECOND TIME-- TO LET *MAN*, *ETERNAL*, AND *DEVIANT* BEGIN ANEW THE SLOW RISE TO *CULTURE*.

THE CELESTIALS RESPONDED BY *WIPING OUT* ALL DEVIANT AND HUMAN *CIVILIZATION*-- WITH *WEAPONS* BEYOND PERHAPS EVEN *YOUR* MIND TO CONCEIVE!

TELL ME, I PRAY THEE-- WERE THE *FIRST TWO HUMANS* CREATED NAMED *ASKE* AND *EMBLA*, AS ASGARDIAN LEGENDS SAY?

ALAS, *THOSE* RECORDS, EVEN IF THEY EXIST, ARE OPEN ONLY TO THE *CELESTIALS*-- NOT EVEN TO *US*.

FOR *OUR-SELVES*, WE HAVE COME HERE BECAUSE WE SENSE IT IS TIME FOR THE *SPACE-GODS* TO COME AGAIN... IN THEIR *THIRD HOST!*

THE ENTITY CALLED *DROMEDAN* WHO DID CALL TO ME BEFORE-- IS *HE* ONE OF YE?

DROMEDAN!? QUICKLY--*WHERE* DID YOU--?

HE WAS *BOUND* SECURELY, IN *YONDER PEAK.*

I *LEFT* HIM THUS, REPULSED BY THE *SHEER, UNRELENTING EVIL* HE DID RADIATE.

YOU DID *WELL!* FOR, HE IS A *MUTATE*...

...A *CREATION OF THE DEVIANTS*... A *MONSTER* DESIGNED BY THEM TO CHALLENGE US *ETERNALS*.

YET, SO UNBELIEVABLY *POWERFUL* WAS DROMEDAN THAT THE DEVIANTS *ENTOMBED* HIM-- FOR THEIR *OWN SAFETY.*

TRUE! WE'VE NEVER BEFORE KNOWN *WHERE* THEY IMPRISONED HIM, HOWEVER... TILL *NOW.*

AYE! NO *GOOD* COULD COME OF *FREEING* SUCH A ONE.

AND, EVEN *KNOWING*, WE'D BEST *KEEP AWAY* FROM HIS TOMB, AND HIS REPUTED *SIREN CALL*.

NO. ONLY ONE WITH *MALICIOUS* INTENT COULD SEE ANY *PURPOSE* IN SUCH AN ACT.

FOR MY PART, *I* CAME HERE FROM ASGARD BY MEANS OF THE *MYSTIC HAMMER* AT MY SIDE.

WHEREAT DO *YE FOUR* DWELL?

NOT FAR *DISTANT*-- BUT HARDLY *ALONE.*

DO YOU WISH TO *SEE?*

WHERE-FORE *NOT?*

MERE MINUTES LATER, ON THE NETHER SIDE OF THE HIGH MOUNTAINS...

HEIMDALL'S EYES!

*...ODIN'S OFFSPRING BEHOLDS A SIGHT TO RIVAL EVEN THE **SPIRES OF ASGARD** ITSELF!*

I TAKE IT BY YOUR EXCLAMATION THAT YOU *APPROVE* OF OUR SETTLEMENT, FRIEND THOR?

AYE! I'VE HAD REASON TO BE *RESTIVE* IN MINE OWN *ASGARD,* OF LATE.

MAYHAP A STAY AMONG YE *ETERNALS* WILL CURE MY SOUL.

AS LONG AS YOU DON'T TRY TO *TAKE OVER*-- YOU ARE *WELCOME!*

INCIDENTALLY THERE ARE *TWENTY* OF US HERE--AND SOME OF US WERE ABOUT TO JOURNEY *NORTHWARD* ON A MISSION WHEN WE SAW YOU.

WILL YOU COME *WITH* US?

ACCEPTED-- AND THAT *GLADLY,* VIRAKO!

FATHER--I THINK I SHALL STAY *HERE,* AND CONTINUE CERTAIN *RESEARCH* I'VE BEGUN.

IT IS *YOUR* DECISION, MY SON. FARE YOU *WELL*...

...AND *GOOD LUCK!*

AND TO *YOU,* SIRE.

AND, WHILE *YOU ETERNALS* AND THAT GOLDEN-HAIRED *OUTSIDER* ARE OUT OF MY WAY--

--THE *RESEARCHES* I'LL CONDUCT WILL NOT *NECESSARILY* BE OF THE TYPE *YOU* WOULD APPROVE, GREAT VALKIN!

FOR, I MEAN TO FIND AND CONTROL... *DROMEDAN, THE DREAMER!*

"ONLY DRUIG REMAINED IN THE ETERNALS' GREAT LAB NOW-- ALONE WITH HIS SCHEMES OF GLORY.

DROMEDAN! THE MOST POWERFUL *MUTATE* OF ALL!

THE *DEVIANTS* IMPRISONED YOU, FROM *FEAR* THAT THEY COULD NOT *DOMINATE* YOU.

BUT, *I* HAVE BEEN PRIVY TO CERTAIN *DEVIANT EXPERIMENTS...*

... AND THIS *NEUTRALIZER HELMET,* I THINK, WILL ENABLE ME TO *CONTROL* YOU!

FREE OF ALL INFLUENCE, YOU COULD *DESTROY A WORLD.*

BUT, WHEN I WEAR *THIS*--

--YOU WILL *CONQUER* THIS LAND FOR *ME,* YOUR *MASTER!*

THEN, NOT EVEN THE VAUNTED *ETERNALS* -- NAY, NOT EVEN THE *CELESTIALS* THEMSELVES--SHALL SET FOOT IN THE *KINGDOM OF DRUIG!*

"ERE LONG, THOU AND THE ETERNALS DID REACH THE **UNTAMED LAND** MANY MILES TO THE NORTH, SWOOPING DOWN ON IT FROM THE **MORNING SKY.**

"THOU DIDST KNOW LITTLE OF THEIR **MASTER PLAN**... BUT STILL, THOU DIDST HOPE TO **LEARN** FROM THEM.

"NOR WERT THOU SHY IN **HELPING** THY NEWFOUND FRIENDS...

ODIN'S BLOOD! 'TIS CLEAR WE **ALL** ARE NO MORE WELCOME HERE THAN WAS **I**, IN YOUR SOUTHERN OUTPOST.

YOU KNOW WHAT TO **DO**, THOR.

AYE, VIRAKO!

SURELY, THE **FURY OF THE ELEMENTS** WILL SOON ENOW **REDUCE** YON PRIMITIVES TO **OBEDIENCE** TO THE **WILL OF THE GODS!**

"AS WELL IT **DID.**

"**WHY**, THEN, DIDST THOU FIND, TO THY SURPRISE, 'TWAS SOMEHOW **DISTASTEFUL** TO BE MERELY **WORSHIPPED**... RATHER THAN **RESPECTED**?

"WHAT **GOOD** WAS WORSHIP TO THEE, IN THE END?

"**VIRAKO**, WHOM THE PRIMITIVES CALLED **QUETZALCOATL**, HAD A **CIVILIZING MISSION.**

"WHAT HAD YOU?

"THUS, AFTER SOME WEEKS, THOU DIDST GROW BORED AND **QUIT** THIS LAND--

"--WHICH ITS NEWLY-CIVILIZED **HUMAN RULERS** WOULD SOON CALL... **MEXICO.**

"MUCH FURTHER NORTH DIDST THOU FLY-- TO A VAST CONTINENT WHICH, FOR THEIR OWN ARCANE REASONS, THE POLAR ETERNALS DID THINK BENEATH THEIR NOTICE.

"THE ADVENTURES THOU MAYEST HAVE HAD THERE BE OF NO CONCERN NOW TO MIMIR... NOR TO THEE, THUNDERER.

"SUFFICE IT TO SAY: IN TIME, THOU DIDST FEEL ANEW THE YEARNINGS TO BE WITH BEINGS LIKE THYSELF.

"YET, 'TWAS STILL NOT IN THINE HEART TO RETURN TO ASGARD, WHILE THESE ENTITIES WHO WERE NOT IMMORTAL YET CALLED THEMSELVES ETERNALS DID INTEREST THEE.

"THEY HAD COMPLETED THEIR MISSION, WHEN THOU DIDST RETURN TO THEM...

"... AND WERE MAKING READY TO DEPART.

"LEAVING ONE 'GOD' AMONG THESE ANCESTORS OF THE FABLED AZTECS--

"--THEY FLEW EAST AGAIN, INTO THE DAWNING SUN--

"--THEN TURNED SOUTH, TO A JUNGLE-SHROUDED LAND HALFWAY BACK TO WHERE THOU DIDST MEET THEM.

"THESE PRIMITIVES, LIKEWISE, THEY HELPED TO GROW CIVILIZED AND REAR GREAT MONUMENTS BEFORE THEY FLEW OFF ONCE MORE.

"HERE, VIRAKO, THE LEADER, WAS CALLED KUKULCAN...

"AND AGAIN, A SINGLE 'GOD' REMAINED BEHIND...

"...THAT THOSE WHOM THE WORLD CALLS MAYAS WOULD NOT TURN BACK TO SAVAGE WAYS.

"BUT STILL, EVEN AS YE FIVE STREAKED BACK SOUTHWARD, THOU DIDST KNOW LITTLE OF THE ETERNALS' ULTIMATE MISSION...

TO WHAT END DO YE CIVILIZE THESE TRIBES, AJAK?

YE HAVE SPOKEN VAGUELY OF THE COMING OF BEINGS CALLED CELESTIALS, AND YET--

YOU'LL SOON SEE, FRIEND THOR--

--AND, UNTIL YOU SEE, IT IS DOUBTFUL YOU WILL BELIEVE!

FOR OUR OWN REASONS, WE HAVE LEFT THE FIRST TRIBE YOU ENCOUNTERED TILL LAST*, BUT NOW THE TIME GROWS NEAR WHEN WE MUST--

ASGARDIAN! ETERNALS! LOOK THERE!

*THIS TRIBE, OF COURSE, ARE THE ANCESTORS OF THOSE WE KNOW AS THE INCAS. -- Roy.

THE SAVAGES ARE ALREADY REARING GREAT TEMPLES-- PYRAMIDS-- SUCH AS WE WISHED TO HELP THEM BUILD, IN TIME--

YET, THEY ARE ACTING WITHOUT US-- AHEAD OF SCHEDULE-- AND WITHOUT THE OTHER ASPECTS OF CIVILIZATION WE MEANT TO DEVELOP.

AND THEY MOVE SO SLUGGISHLY! WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF IT, GREAT VALKIN?

FOR A MOMENT, I FEARED THAT MY SON DRUIG HAD BECOME IMPATIENT, AS HE EVER IS, OF THE SLOW, STRUCTURED WAY WE ETERNALS DO THINGS.

HOWEVER, I DON'T SEE HIM DIRECTING THE BUILDING OF THE MONUMENTS, SO--

HOLD! VERILY, I DO BEHOLD THY SON, VALKIN!

Eh? WHERE--?

ATOP YON PEAK-- STANDING AS IF FROZEN--

--YET WITH GREEN FLAMES WRITHING SKYWARD FROM THE STRANGE HELMET HE DOTH WEAR!

WE MUST-- BY THE POLAR WINDS! WHAT--?

MY VERY MIND-- 'TIS AS THOUGH IT BE INVADED BY SOME DREAD FORCE FROM WITHOUT--

--AS WHEN I DID ENCOUNTER THE ONE CALLED DROMEDAN!

DROMEDAN!? NO! MY SON-- YOU COULD NOT HAVE--!

"AN INSTANT MORE, AND THOU ALONE DIDST STAND ON THINE OWN FEET, ABOARD A PILOTLESS CRAFT WHICH TOPPLED FROM THE SKY...

SLEIPNIR'S HOOVES! I MAY SURVIVE THE FALL, EVEN FROM THIS VAST HEIGHT--

--BUT, I CANNOT CONTROL THIS STRANGELING VESSEL!

MYSTIC MJOLNIR! THOU ART THE POWER OF THE STORM INCARNATE.

LET NOW THY RESOUNDING THUNDER WAKEN WHICHEVER MAY BE THE STOUTEST, THE MOST FIT OF THESE BEINGS WHO STYLE THEMSELVES ETERNALS--

--THAT THEIR LIFELESS ATOMS BE NOT STREWN ACROSS AN ENTIRE PLANET!

Ah--VIRAKO! I MIGHT HAVE KNOWN 'TWOULD BE THEE WHO'D HEED THE CALL!

I'LL RETURN THE COMPLIMENT LATER, GOD OF ASGARD...

...AFTER I STOP THIS SHIP FROM BECOMING JUST ANOTHER ARK, SCATTERED ACROSS THE FACE OF HOSTILE MOUNTAINS!

BUT--LOOK AT WHAT'S HAPPENING BELOW--!

THE TEMPLE IS ALREADY MIRACULOUSLY HALF-COMPLETED--

BUT, THERE ARE OMINOUS RUMBLINGS FROM WITHIN! SEE HOW SOME GREAT FORCE BENDS THE VERY PORTALS OUTWARD!

NOW THEY BURST OPEN-- TO REVEAL THE ONE WITHIN--

--AND IT CAN ONLY BE-- DROMEDAN!

YES, YOU SONS OF THE POLAR MOUNTAINS -- I AM *DROMEDAN!*

AND, THOUGH I'VE NEVER *SEEN* YOU BEFORE -- STILL DO I *KNOW* YOU, FROM THE *BRAIN WAVES* I HAVE INTERCEPTED AS I LAY *ENTOMBED* --

--*AND* FROM MY STRUGGLES WITH THE THIRTEEN OTHERS WHO NOW LIE HELPLESS IN YOUR PROUD *TOWERS.*

ETERNALS! TAKE PRECAUTIONS AGAINST THE MUTATE'S *MENTAL ASSAULT!*

FOOLS! DO YOU THINK THAT, IN ALL THESE MONTHS, I'VE NOT MADE *PREPARATIONS* AGAINST THE DAY OF YOUR *RETURN?*

THUNDER! COME *FORWARD!*

"*NEXT MOMENT, FROM THE INNER RECESSES OF THE TEMPLE, A DIABOLIC FIGURE EMERGES --*

INCREDIBLE! THAT ENTITY IS ONLY A *MYTH* -- A PRODUCT OF THE SAVAGES' AWAKENING *MINDS --*

BUT *DROMEDAN* HAS MADE HIM -- *REAL!*

REAL AND *DEADLY* -- AS YOU WITLESS ONES SHALL SOON *LEARN!*

"*AND, EVEN AS ETERNALS AND ASGARDIAN GAPED IN AWE AT ONE TOWERING MONSTROSITY --*

THRAM!

DEMONS OF THE PITS!

THE VERY *MOUNTAINS* DO BURST ASUNDER!

WE *ETERNALS* KNOW OF HIM, ASGARDIAN -- FROM THE REPORTS OF OUR SWIFT-FOOTED *SPIES!*

HE IS **TUTINAX**, *THE MOUNTAIN-MOVER* -- MOST PHYSICALLY *POWERFUL* OF ALL THE DEVIANTS' *MUTATES!*

AND *WHO --?*

I AM PLEASED YOU *RECOGNIZE* ME, VERMIN --

FOR, I AM THE *LAST* THING YOU SHALL EVER *SEE!*

FRIEND THOR! PERHAPS IT'S BEST THAT YOU CONFRONT THE BEING CALLED ONLY THUNDER, FOR OBVIOUS REASONS--

--WHILE WE ETERNALS BATTLE THE GIGANTIC ENTITY TUTINAX.

SO BE IT, VIRAKO!

COME THEN, ETERNALS! LET US--

OH, YOU SHALL COME TO TUTINAX RIGHT ENOUGH, YOU FLYING FLEAS--

KRAK

--COME TO GROVEL AT TUTINAX' FEET, BEFORE HE DEIGNS TO DISPOSE OF YOU!

MY CREATORS, THE DEVIANTS, MUST HAVE BEEN A LESSER RACE INDEED--TO HAVE FEARED SUCH AS YOU!

MY INBORN MENTAL PATTERNS TELL ME THAT YOU ETERNALS CANNOT BE KILLED--

BUT, I CAN MAKE CERTAIN THAT YOUR LONG, LONG LIVES ARE SPENT IN UTTER, UNENDING MISERY.

EH? YOU ARE STILL DEFIANT?

WE ALLOWED OURSELVES TO FALL TO EARTH, MUTATE--IN ORDER TO GET CLOSER TO YOU.

AND NOW, YOU SHALL FEEL THE FULL, UNRELIEVED FURY OF AN ETERNAL UNBOUND!

ZZAK!

YOU ARE PERHAPS WORTHIER FOES THAN I HAD IMAGINED--

--BUT STILL, I AM *TUTINAX*, THE STRONGEST *SINGLE DEVIANT* OF ALL!

I AM *MIGHTIER* BY FAR, THAN *ANY* DEVIANT OR ETERNAL!

TRUE, PERHAPS-- BUT THERE IS ONE THING WE *ETERNALS* UNDERSTAND WHICH YOU DO *NOT*--!

RIGHT, VALKIN! AND THAT THING IS -- *TEAMWORK!*

ARRRR

BLAM!

EXCELLENT, AJAK! BUT-- CAN WE STOP HIM FROM *RISING* AGAIN?

"AS FOR THEE, GODLING--WHAT DOTH HAPPEN WHEN TWO LIGHTNING-BOLTS CLASH IN THE SKY--OR TWIN THUNDERHEADS COLLIDE PELL-MELL?

"THAT, THOU WERT DETERMINED TO LEARN, IN THAT WORLD OF MORE THAN A MILLENNIUM AGONE.

"FOR, THE PRIMITIVE LEGENDS OF THE PRE-INCAS TOLD OF ONE CALLED ONLY 'THUNDER', WHO TRAVERSED THE COSMIC VOID ARMED WITH WEIGHTY CLUB AND DEADLY SLING.

"YET, THOUGH THIS BEING FORMED OF DROMEDAN'S MATCHLESS MIND WAS ENDOWED WITH ALL THE PSYCHIC PROWESS GLEANED FROM THE BRAINS OF COUNTLESS PRIMITIVE WARRIORS--

"--STILL HE DID FACE THOR, WHO WAS AND IS A GOD OF THUNDER--

"--AND NEITHER MAN NOR MUTATE HATH E'ER SEEN THINE EQUAL IN SHEER VIOLENT COMBAT!

"HIS WAR-CLUB SHATTERED NOW--

"--THE CREATION OF DROMEDAN LET FLY WITH BALLS OF LETHAL FIRE FROM HIS DREADED SLING!

"IN LATER YEARS, AN INCA LEGEND WILL TELL OF FOUR GREAT CATACLYSMS WHICH FELL, IN ANCIENT TIMES, UPON THE EARTH:

"FIRST, THE TALE SAYS, FIRE DID DEVASTATE THE WORLD--

"--THOUGH WHETHER IT WAS SENT BY BENEVOLENT, CLEANSING GODS OR BY SOME TOPPLING STAR, IT DOES NOT MAKE CLEAR.

"TO THE WATCHING PRIMITIVES, HOWEVER -- HOVERING IN THEIR HUTS -- ALL OCCURRED TOO QUICKLY FOR THEIR UNTRAINED EYES.

"SMALL WONDER, THEN, THAT THE STORIES VARY IN THE RE-TELLING, FROM TRIBE TO TRIBE.

"SUFFICE IT TO SAY-- THOU DIDST TRIUMPH!

"AFTER THE GREAT FIRE, HOWE'ER, MEN SAY A SECOND CATACLYSM BEFELL, AS DREADFUL AS THE FIRST...

"... AND WITNESSED BY THE SAME COWERING SAVAGES:

"WHETHER 'TWAS DROMEDAN WHO DID CAUSE IT, IN THE ANNALS OF THE ETERNALS--OR THE THEFT OF THE SUN, IN OTHER LEGENDS --

"--THE EARTH WAS SUDDENLY PLUNGED INTO THE 'LONG NIGHT'--A TIME OF UTTER, ABYSMAL BLACKNESS!

ODIN PRESERVE US!

"EVEN THEN, WHILE THE DARKNESS WAS ALL AROUND, THE THIRD CATACLYSM CAME UPON THE WORLD...

"... AS DOMESTIC OBJECTS--IDOLS--ALL THE PRIMITIVE ARTIFACTS OF THE SAVAGES--REBELLED AGAINST MANKIND!

"THOU AND THE ETERNALS DID BEAR THE BRUNT OF THE ATTACK--YET MANY A NATIVE WAS HARMED AS WELL --

"--TILL THOU DIDST STRIKE ONCE MORE THY MYSTIC MALLET ON THE GROUND--

"--TO SET THE WHOLE NIGHT ABLAZE WITH INSTANT LIGHTNING--

"--AND REVEAL THE SOURCE OF THE PUMMELING!

"STARTLED IN THE SUDDEN LIGHT, TUTINAX PAUSED FOR A MOMENT--

"--LONG ENOUGH FOR THREE ETERNALS TO BOMBARD HIM WITH POWERFUL OPTIC BLASTS!

"AND TUTINAX, HE WHO HAD MOVED MOUNTAINS, PROVED HIMSELF NOT IM-MOVABLE IN THE END.

BAH! I BURROWED THROUGH AN ETERNITY OF ROCK TO FIND MY FELLOW MUTATE, WHERE THE FEARFUL DEVIANTS BURIED HIM -- BUT IT SEEMS I MERELY WASTED MY T--

WHAT? TUTINAX IS FADING-- VANISHING --

BUT WHY? AND TO WHERE?*

*SEE ETERNALS ANNUAL #1, 1977, FOR THE AWE-SOME ANSWER. -- Roy.

KLOMR!

NO MATTER! DROMEDAN ALONE STILL SHALL BE DROMEDAN VICTORIOUS!

BEHOLD, ETERNALS -- AND GOLD-HAIRED INTERLOPER!

"OF ONE MORE CATACLYSM DO THE INCA LEGENDS SPEAK...

"...THE GREAT TIDAL WAVE WHICH DID ARISE AS IF FROM NOWHERE, TO OVERWHELM ALL THE LAND!

"LATER AGES WILL MARVEL THAT THE INCAS, SO FAR FROM THE SEA, SHOULD HAVE A FLOOD LEGEND LIKE SO MANY OTHER PEOPLES...

"YET, E'EN SO, DROMEDAN HAD RECKONED WITHOUT THE FULL, UNFETTERED FORCE OF MIGHTY MJOLNIR, MOST PERFECT OF WEAPONS.

"WITH A SINGLE, SOUL-SHATTERING BLOW, THOU DIDST RIVEN THE VERY EARTH BENEATH THY FEET -- SPLINTERING ROCK AND DIRT AND ROOTS OF TREES --

" -- AND INTO THAT GREAT, YAWNING ABYSS DID POUR THE RAGING FLOOD WATERS OF DROMEDAN!

DAMN THE ASGARDIAN! HE HAS UPSET THE BALANCE OF POWER BETWEEN THE ETERNALS AND MYSELF.

PLAM!

WITHOUT HIS INTERFERENCE, I WOULD ALREADY HAVE DEFEATED THEM!

STILL, I'VE ONE MORE PLOY-- BEFORE I'M FORCED TO EMPLOY MY PRECIOUS MIND-DOMINATION POWERS UPON THEM.

BEHOLD, MY FINE FOES-- THIS DEVIANT COAGULATION CANNISTER!

IF I CANNOT RULE THIS LAND-- THEN I SHALL DESTROY IT, AND YOU WITH IT!

ETERNALS--KNOW YE WHAT BASE TREACHERY DROMEDAN DOTH NOW PLAN?

WOULD TO THE CELESTIALS THAT I DID, THOR!

WAIT, VALKIN! DO YOU REMEMBER THE TALES OF-- THE WORLD-DEVOURING WORM?

IT WAS SEALED IN SUCH A CYLINDER BY THE DEVIANTS, EONS AGO!

MMMMM-M!

YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF DEVIANT SCIENCE DOES YOU PROUD, VIRAKO-- THOUGH IT WILL DO YOU NO GOOD!

"HURLED DOWN, THE CANNISTER SPILT OUT A TINY EARTHWORM.

"WITHIN SECONDS, THE CREATURE HAD EATEN ENOUGH OF THE EARTH ITSELF TO SWELL TO GARGANTUAN PROPORTIONS!

"LARGER, EVER LARGER IT GREW--TILL IT RIVALED THE SIZE OF THE MOUNTAIN PEAKS THEMSELVES--

SWOOSH

"--SUCKING INTO ITS MONSTROUS MAW MUCH OF THE CITY BUILT BY THE HYPNOTIZED PRE-INCAS--

"--AND VERY NEARLY THE GODS THEMSELVES.

"YET, THREE OF THOSE DID RUSH TO THE ATTACK, DEFYING THE MONSTER WORM--

"--WHILE VIRAKO HIED HIM TO THEIR VESSEL.

"THEIR ATOMICALLY-POWERED VESSEL!

ONE CHANCE-- BASED ON WHAT I KNOW OF DEVIANT TECHNOLOGY!

THEY MASTERED MANY SOURCES OF POWER-- BUT NOT THE ATOM!

MUST EXPOSE MYSELF-- TO A LETHAL DOSE OF NUCLEAR ENERGY!

"MEANWHILE, NEITHER OPTIC BLASTS NOR EVEN MAGNIFICENT MJOLNIR COULD STAY THE ATTACK OF THE WORM-THING...

BY YMIR'S FROZEN BREATH!

OUR VERY BLOWS DO BUT SERVE TO MAKE THE MONSTER GROW E'EN LARGER--

--AS IT DOTH DEVOUR NOT ONLY THE ELEMENTS OF THE EARTH, BUT ANY FORCE WHICH BE HURLED AGAINST IT!

"THEN, JUST AS THOU DIDST STRIKE BELATEDLY UPON THAT COSMIC TRUTH--

"--THERE CAME A WHISTLING OF AIR!

STAND BACK, ALL!

VIRAKO!?

NO, MY BROTHER!

I MUST, VALKIN--

I MUST!!

"THUS, WITH A MINIMUM OF HISTRIONICS, THE FOREMOST POLAR ETERNAL DID HURL HIMSELF, GLOWING WITH NUCLEAR FORCE, INTO THE YAWNING MAW OF THE GREAT WORM--

"--FEEDING IT THE ONE SOURCE OF ENERGY FOR WHICH EVEN DROMEDAN COULD NOT HAVE PREPARED IT, BEING OF DEVIANT ORIGIN!

"A HEARTBEAT LATER, AND THE ATOMIC POWER DID ITS WORK!

"THE WORLD-DEVOURING WORM DID EXPLODE-- ERUPTING IN AN EERIE PHANTASMAGORIA OF SOUND AND COLOR AND INVISIBLE POWER WHICH NONE CLOSE BY, SAVE ONLY ASGARDIANS AND ETERNALS BORN, COULD HAVE SURVIVED!

"AND THE BLOOD OF THE THING, CHANGED BY THE EXPLOSION INTO RADIATION, WAS LIKE A RAINBOW-- GIVING BIRTH TO MYTHS FAR MORE BEAUTIFUL THAN THE VILE WORM-THING ITSELF!

"AND VIRAKO WAS SEEN NO MORE AMONG MEN OR MAN-GODS...

"...THOUGH THE INCAS, IN LATER DAYS, DID REMEMBER HIM AS A CULTURAL HERO-- VIRACOCHA-- WHOM THEY DID RAISE TO BE THEIR SUPREME DEITY!

"BUT, WHILST GODS AND SAVAGES REJOICED, ONE ENTITY STILL MADE READY FOR WAR...

FOOLS! MY MENTAL POWERS WILL BE SEVERELY TESTED, SINCE I MUST FIGHT SEVERAL FOES, NOT ONE-- AND I'VE HAD BUT SCANT PRACTICE BATTLING ETERNALS AND GODLINGS--!

STILL, I WILL DEFEAT YOU-- AS I DID THE ONE CALLED DRUIG!

DRUIG IS MY SON, BRAIN-SNATCHER-- BUT HE IS STILL A LESSER ETERNAL THAN VALKIN AND AJAK.

NOW, YOU FACE ETERNALS FIGHTING NOT ONLY FOR A PEOPLE AND A CAUSE-- BUT FOR DIVINE VENGEANCE!

LITTLE ENOW DO I KNOW OF THY CAUSE, STILL, GREAT VALKIN--

--BUT YET THE SON OF ODIN SHALL FIGHT BESIDE THEE, TO AVENGE THE SACRIFICE OF VIRAKO!

"VALKIN'S ASSAULT, HOWEVER, WAS FORE-DOOMED...

HAH! JUST AS YOUR SON FELL TO ME, BECAUSE HE AWAKENED ME BEFORE HIS NEUTRALIZER HELMET HAD FULLY CONTROLLED ME --

SLAM!

--SO HAVE YOU NOW FALLEN TO-- ARRRHH!

THWAK!

"THE URU HAMMER, OF COURSE, WAS A MORE FORMIDABLE WEAPON THAN OPTIC BLASTS AND SHEER STRENGTH, AND A SECOND BLOW MIGHT HAVE FELLED THE MIND-STEALING MUTATE...

"BUT, HE STRUCK MENTALLY E'EN BEFORE IT COULD RETURN TO THINE HAND!

FALL, INTRUDER! FALL!!

NAY! THOUGH A THOUSAND DEVILS SLASH MY BRAIN WITH POISONED BLADES--

STILL SHALL THOR FIGHT ON!

"MAYHAP THOU WOULDST HAVE PREVAILED... MAYHAP NOT...

"YET, IN THAT INSTANT, SWIFT AJAK FLEW ABOVE...

IF DRUIG'S HELMET MISSES--!

NO! I DARE NOT EVEN THINK IT!

"NOR DID HE NEED TO!

UNNH!

PLUNK!

"FOR A FLEETING SECOND, THERE WAS STILL TIME TO REMOVE THE NEUTRALIZER HELMET--

"BUT, GREAT MJOLNIR IS AS MUCH A HAMMER AS A WEAPON, AFTER ALL!

THOU SHALT NOT REMOVE THE HELMET, VILE ONE!

SLAMM!

"'TWAS HAMMERED TIGHTLY ON, ERE HE COULD RISE...

"THEN, THE THREAT OF DROMEDAN ENDED; THE SPELL WHICH HELD DRUIG IN THRALL WAS LIFTED, AS WELL...

FATHER, VALKIN! AJAK! I-- CAN MOVE AGAIN--!

YOU'RE LUCKY, DRUIG, THAT ETERNALS CAN'T TRULY DIE -- THOUGH IN TRUTH, YOU DESERVE TO!

I BEG YOU, AJAK-- THOR -- DON'T JUDGE MY SON TOO HARSHLY!

AFTER ALL, IT WAS IN THE PURSUIT OF KNOWLEDGE THAT HE FREED THE BRAIN-SNATCHER -- WHO MERELY PROVED TOO STRONG TO CONTROL.

YES, SIRE. THAT'S THE WAY IT WAS.

"DID EVEN NOBLE VALKIN BELIEVE HIS OWN WORDS? PERHAPS.

"THE MIND OF EVEN AN ETERNAL HATH A NIGH-INFINITE CAPACITY FOR SELF-DECEPTION.

VALKIN -- IF ETERNALS CANNOT PERISH, THEN CAN BRAVE VIRAKO BE RESTORED TO -- WHAT HE WAS?

I FEAR NOT! THE CELESTIAL FORCE CAN CAUSE EVEN AN ETERNAL'S ATOMS TO BE SCATTERED* -- AND WE'VE NOT YET LEARNED THE SECRET OF RE-CREATING THEM.

ONE DAY... PERHAPS...

*SEE ETERNALS #19. -- Roy.

MEANWHILE, BE IT KNOWN THAT I, VIRAKO'S BROTHER, HEREBY NAME HIS ONLY OFFSPRING, IKARIS -- AS MY OWN ADOPTED SON!

FROM THIS DAY, I SHALL BE BOTH UNCLE TO HIM -- AND FATHER!

"PERCHANCE DRUIG MEANT TO OBJECT --

AS THOR MIGHT SAY -- SO BE IT!

"BUT, JUST THEN --

ETERNALS! WHAT BE THIS MASSIVE SHADOW THAT DOTH SUDDENLY COME 'TWIXT US AND THE SUN?

THE CELESTIALS THEMSELVES! THEY'VE COME!!

AGAIN THIS TALK OF "CELESTIALS"!

WHO *ARE* THEY? AND WHAT HAVE THEY TO DO WITH THY *MISSION* WHICH-- UNNHHH!

I *REGRET* THIS MORE THAN I CAN *SAY*, FRIEND THOR--

BUT, YOU *MUST NOT STAY*--LEST YOU DECIDE TO *DO BATTLE* WITH THEM--AND THUS, WITH *US!*

THUS, I'VE PLANNED FOR MONTHS TO *ROB* YOU, AT THIS FATEFUL MOMENT, OF YOUR *MEMORY*--AS I'VE JUST DONE--

--FILLING YOUR BRAIN WITH *FALSE* MEMORIES, INSTEAD!

RETURN NOW, PRINCE OF ASGARD, TO YOUR *OWN* LAND--

--FULL OF *ALL* THAT HAPPENED ON EARTH, *EXCEPT* YOUR MEETING WITH THE *ETERNALS*--THE *MUTATES*--AND THE *CELESTIALS!*

A PITY THIS WAS *NECESSARY*, GREAT VALKIN!

YES, BUT *WHO KNOWS?*

ONE DAY, WHEN IT IS THE *FOURTH* CELESTIAL HOST WHICH COMES, INSTEAD OF THE *THIRD*--

--*THOR, GOD OF THUNDER*, MAY YET PLAY A PART IN THIS *DRAMA OF WORLDS* FAR BEYOND EVEN *HIS* IMMORTAL DREAMS!

"*THEN, NOT EVEN SEEING THE GARGANTUAN, MIND-DWARFING* **STARSHIP** *WHICH HOVE INTO VIEW BEHIND THEE--THOU DIDST* **DEPART.**

"*IN TIME, THE* **ETERNALS** *LEFT AS WELL, LEAVING BEHIND ONLY* **AJAK**--*KNOWN TO THE SAVAGES AND INCAS AS* **TECUMOTZIN**--*TO DEAL WITH THE* **CELESTIALS.**

"*AND THOU DIDST RETURN TO GLEAMING* **ASGARD**, *ACROSS THE FABLED* **RAINBOW BRIDGE.**

--TO REMEMBER SO LITTLE OF IMPORT, UNTIL MIMIR DID REMIND THEE!

'TIS TRUE! AT LAST-- MEMORY'S FLOODGATE DOTH GAPE WIDE!

YET, WHAT MATTER SUCH THINGS TO THOR-- WITH RAGNAROK SO NEAR?

IT ALL HAPPENED-- SO LONG AGO--!

AYE! AND SO, PERHAPS I SHOULD SHOW THEE--

--THIS FINAL IMAGE, OF EARTH TODAY--

--A SCENE OCCURRING AMID THE SOUTH AMERICAN MOUNTAINS MEN CALL THE ANDES--!

NAY! BY ALL MY PEERS-- IT MUST NOT BE!

SAY THAT THOU DOST LIE, MIMIR!

"THOU DOST KNOW I LIE NOT, THUNDERER!

"IN A FLEETING INSTANT, I, WHO KNOW ALL-- BUT REVEAL ONLY THAT WHICH DOTH PLEASE ME-- HAVE SHOWN THEE ARISHEM AND THE DREADED FOURTH HOST OF WHICH VALKIN SPOKE.

"THESE ARE THE CELESTIALS-- AND THEY WALK THE EARTH TODAY, TO JUDGE IT!

"ALL WALK, THAT IS, SAVE ARISHEM-- WHO DOTH STAND UNMOVING UPON TWIN PYLONS.

"YET, LESS THAN HALF A CENTURY FROM NOW, ARISHEM SHALL MOVE-- TO MAKE HIS JUDGMENT UPON THIS EARTH WHERE STELLAR SEEDS WERE SOWED, MILLENNIA AGO.

"AND, IN THAT MOMENT, THE EARTH THOU HAST E'ER LOVED MAY WELL PERISH AT THEIR HANDS!

HALF A CENTURY! AN ETERNITY TO A HUMAN-- LESS TO AN ETERNAL--

--BUT THE BLINKING OF AN EYE TO SUCH AS THEE!

NOT SO VERY LONG-- FOR A PLANET TO LIVE!!

KNOWING THAT CYNICAL MIMIR EVER LOVES TO EXCHANGE TAUNTS WITH HIM, THOR ANSWERS NOT--

...BUT HURTLES, BEHIND MIGHTY MJOLNIR, OUT OF ASGARD ITSELF.

SOON, HE'LL FACE LOKI IN THE HOME OF THE TROLLS* --AND OTHER PERILS OF RAGNAROK.

*IN THOR #275, OF COURSE. --R.

BUT NOW: MIMIR IS LEFT ALONE IN THIS SHADOWED RECESS OF ODIN'S GREAT HALL, SPEAKING ONLY TO HIMSELF...

WHAT FOOLS BOTH MORTALS AND IMMORTALS BE!

THEY THINK, BECAUSE THEY ARE MORE THAN HUMAN, TO CONTROL THEIR OWN FATES...

YET, WHEN THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS HATH CHANGED MAYHAP TO DAWN--

--THE DANGER TO EARTH SHALL LOOM LARGE, E'ER LARGER IN THE THUNDER GOD'S MIND AGAIN!

FOR, THE DESTINY OF THOR BE E'ER ENTWINED WITH THAT OF HIS ADOPTIVE WORLD--

--FOR REASONS ONLY ODIN AND MIMIR DO KNOW!

AND ODIN, POOR SOUL, BE PLEDGED NE'ER TO TELL--

--WHILE MIMIR DOTH KEEP COUNCIL--

--ONLY WITH HIMSELF!

TO BE CONTINUED--*IN THE PAGES OF* **THE MIGHTY THOR,** *ON SALE MONTHLY!*

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THE MIGHTY

THOR

BEWARE, PLUTO! HAVE AT THEE, ULIK!

THOU SHALT PAY DEARLY FOR HOLDING CAPTIVE THE BELOVED OF THOR!

ASGARDIAN FOOL! THOU SHALT PERISH HERE, IN THE DOMAIN OF THE DEAD!

SLAY HIM, TROLL-KING!

COCKRUM/SINNOTT

A HAMMER IN HADES!

When DR. DONALD BLAKE strikes his wooden walking-stick upon the ground, it becomes the mystic hammer MJOLNIR— and the lame physician is transformed into the Norse God of Thunder, Master of the Storm, Lord of the Living Lightning— and heir to the throne of eternal Asgard....

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY THOR!™

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GLYNIS WEIN, COLORIST
JOE ROSEN, LETTERER
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A HAMMER IN HADES!

BY THE EIGHT HOOVES OF SLEIPNIR!

DO MINE EYES DECEIVE ME??

57th ST. MADISON AVE

ISON AVE.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO READ IT ALL...

PERHAPS IT IS BECAUSE HE IS ONCE MORE AN **EXILE FROM ASGARD**-- HAVING LEFT THE REALM ETERNAL IN DEFIANCE OF THE SOLEMN COMMAND OF **ALL-FATHER ODIN***--THAT HE MAKES THE **UNACCUSTOMED ERROR.**

FOR, IT IS A **WEIGHTY** THING INDEED, TO LEAVE BEHIND ONE'S DIVINE **HOMELAND**-- OUT OF LOYALTY TO THE WORLD CALLED **EARTH**, WHICH SHOULD MEAN NO MORE TO HIM THAN A **WAY-STATION** HE HAS VISITED FROM TIME TO TIME.

BUT, IT HAS COME TO MEAN **MUCH** TO HIM, THIS PLACE THE GODS CALL **MIDGARD**, OR **MIDDLE GARDEN**--

--AND HE COULD **NOT** STAND IDLY BY, BEYOND THE RAINBOW BRIDGE, TO SEE IT SUFFER THE **JUDGMENT OF THE CELESTIALS...!****

* LAST ISSUE. --ROY.

** SEE "AND EVER-- THE ETERNALS!" IN THOR ANNUAL #7, STILL ON SALE! --R.

THUS, HE HAS RETURNED, THOUGH BRIEFLY, TO THE CITY HIS ALTER EGO **DR. DONALD BLAKE** HAS LONG CALLED **HOME**--

--BEFORE EMBARKING SOUTH TO THE **PERUVIAN MOUNTAINS,** AND A FATE WHICH EVEN A **THUNDER GOD** CAN SCARCELY IMAGINE!

NAY! 'TWAS **NOT** THE ONES I **THOUGHT!**

AND HOW **COULD** IT HAVE BEEN **JANE FOSTER,** WITH OR WITHOUT THE MAN CALLED **DR. KINCAID**--

...WHEN JANE FOSTER **NO LONGER EXISTS**-- HER SPIRIT SUBMERGED IN THE MIND OF MINE OWN BELOVED **LADY SIF!**

IN SOOTH, I KNOW **NOT** WHETHER I DO LOVE **ONE** WOMAN, A **GODDESS**--OR **TWO!**

ONCE, HOWE'ER, I DID WISH TO MAKE THE MORTAL NURSE MINE OWN **WIFE**...BUT 'TWAS **NOT TO BE!**

"FOR, GREAT **ODIN** DID DECLARE THAT NONE BUT A **GODDESS** COULD WED AN **ASGARDIAN BORN!**

"AND, THOUGH HE DID NOBLY OFFER TO **RE-CREATE** JANE FOSTER AS AN **IMMORTAL**--

"--SHE DID FIND THE BURDEN OF **GODHOOD** TOO MUCH TO **BEAR!***

IN THE CLASSIC ISSUE 136. --ROY AGAIN.

"THUS, ODIN DID **FORBID** OUR MARRIAGE, ROBBING JANE OF **ALL MEMORY** OF ME FOR A TIME...

"...**TRANSFERRING** THAT LOVE TO ONE OF HER OWN MORTAL KIND... **DR. KINCAID.**

STILL, OF LATE, THE VERY **ESSENCE** OF JANE FOSTER HATH BEEN MELDED--

--WITH THAT OF HER WHO HATH CAPTURED MY HEART--THE GODDESS **SIF,** SISTER TO WATCHFUL **HEIMDALL!***

***THOR* 236.** --R.T.

YET, OUT OF *EIGHT MILLION* MORTALS IN THIS TEEMING CITY, SHE WHO I DID *BEHOLD* A MOMENT SINCE--

--BORE SO *UNCANNY* A RESEMBLANCE TO *JANE FOSTER.*

UNCANNY, *INDEED!*

NOW, THE THUNDERER'S THOUGHTS DRIFT ***BACK IN TIME...***

...BACK TO A DAY SHORTLY ***AFTER*** *JANE FOSTER'S FATEFUL* ***VISIT TO ASGARD:***

DONALD BLAKE M.D.

FUNNY! AS *THOR,* I CAN BATTLE FOR *DAYS* WITHOUT GETTING TIRED.

BUT, AS *DR. DONALD BLAKE,* SOMETIMES I NEED A CUP OF *COFFEE* TO PERK ME UP...

...OR EVEN TO MAKE IT THRU THE *AFTERNO--*

GOOD LORD! MY *WALKING STICK*-- IT'S *GLOWING,* AS IF CHARGED WITH SOME SORT OF *WEIRD ENERGY!*

BUT *WHAT* FORCE COULD TAKE *POSSESSION* OF IT-- WHEN IT'S THE EARTHLY MANIFESTATION OF MY *URU HAMMER?*

AMAZING! WHATEVER IT IS-- IT'S GUIDING ME TOWARD THE *DOOR--!*

THEN, AS DON BLAKE ALLOWED HIMSELF TO BE ***LED*** *BY THE ENCHANTED CANE...*

IT'S WORKING LIKE A *DOWSER'S ROD*-- BRINGING ME UP HERE TO THE *ROOF!*

NOW, IT'S LEADING ME TO THE *EDGE*-- PULLING *IRRESISTIBLY* ON ME!

AND, SINCE *DR. BLAKE* WASN'T BORN WITH *WINGS--*

--I'D BETTER HURRY UP AND *STRIKE* THE STAFF ON THE ROOF, SO I CAN *CONTINUE* THIS LITTLE ADVENTURE AS--

SLAM!

...THOR, GOD OF THUNDER!

THOUGH THE STAFF HATH BEEN MYSTICALLY TRANSFORMED INTO MJOLNIR--

--STILL DOTH IT PULSATE TO GUIDE MINE GRASPING HAND.

INDEED, 'TIS MOST PASSING STRANGE.

BUT, IF MINE ENCHANTED HAMMER HATH A DESTINATION TOWARD WHICH TO LEAD ME--

--THEN SO BE IT! FOR, I CAN DO NAUGHT BUT FOLLOW--

--IF THIS CONUNDRUM SHALT EVER BE RESOLVED.

FOR ONCE, IT WAS MJOLNIR ITSELF THAT DETERMINED THOR'S FLIGHT--

--PULLING HIM BEYOND THE CITY LIMITS, WHERE--

I DON'T KNOW WHY I CAME OUT TO THIS AREA. I'VE NEVER BEEN HERE BEFORE.

IT'S AS IF SOME SILENT VOICE CALLED ME TO THIS SPOT.

AND NOW THAT I'M HERE, WHAT DO I--?

BUT HER ATTENTION WAS SUDDENLY ON SOMETHING ELSE, DESCENDING FROM THE SKY.

'TIS SHE WHO ONCE CLAIMED MINE HEART...BUT WHO NOW KNOWS ME ONLY AS A FRIEND--

--JANE FOSTER!

THOR!

SOMETHING *DREW* ME TO THIS SPOT, THOR... SOMETHING I CAN'T--

≠UHH?≠ WHAT'S *HAPPENING?!*

BY THE *REALM ETERNAL!* THE VERY *GROUND* DOTH OPEN 'NEATH JANE'S FEET--

--WHILST FROM THE GAPING *PIT* DO RISE TENTACLES OF *DEMONS!*

THOR-- HELP ME! THEY'RE PULLING ME *DOWN!!*

I SAY THEE NAY!

NO HARM SHALL *EVER* BEFALL THEE, WOMAN--

--NOT WHILST THERE LIVES A *THUNDER GOD--*

--WITH ENCHANTED MALLET *RAISED FOR BATTLE!*

WHAT FOUL *WITCHERY* BE THIS?!

THE EARTH DOTH *MEND* ITSELF IN A BLAZE OF HELLISH *FLAME!*

JANE HATH BEEN *SNATCHED* FROM THE FACE OF *MIDGARD!*

AND, WHOEVER BE *RESPONSIBLE* FOR THIS BASE *PERFIDY--*

--SHALT KNOW THE UNBRIDLED *WRATH* OF THE *GOD OF THUNDER!*

KA-THOOM!

THUS, *AGAIN* THE EARTH YAWNETH *OPEN.*

YET, *THIS* TIME, THE CHASM BE OF *MJOLNIR'S* MAKING.

THOUGH THERE MAY BE *MORE* DEMONS LURKING BELOW, DESCEND I *SHALL!*

BUT, UPON ENTERING THE CAVERNOUS PIT...

NOT DEMONS, BUT *ELDRITCH LIGHTS* NOW ATTACK ME!

AND, THOUGH MINE HAMMER DOTH PASS INEFFECTUALLY *THROUGH* THEM--

--STILL THEY *CLING* TO ME-- *WEAKEN* ME--

--*DRAINING OFF* THE FAR-FAMED--

...POWER OF THOR...

SLEEP CAME.

AND, WHEN AT LAST THE THUNDER GOD AGAIN ***OPENED HIS EYES...***

... AN ***ETERNITY*** *MIGHT HAVE PASSED.*

FOR, THE REALM IN WHICH HE HAD ***AWAKENED*** *WAS NOT* ***AFFECTED*** *BY THE DICTATES OF* ***TIME...***

...NOR ***LOCATED*** *ACCORDING TO THE RESTRICTIONS OF* ***SPACE.***

THE SULPHUR-REEKING CAVERN WAS ***FAMILIAR*** *TO THOR.*

HE HAD ***BEEN*** *HERE BEFORE.**

* IN *THOR* #130.-- HISTORIAN ROY.

THOSE TENTACLED *DEMONS*-- YON ETERNAL *FIRES*-- THIS CAN *ONLY* BE THE MOST *DREADED* OF ALL REALMS!

INDEED, SON OF ODIN!

THAT RESOUNDING *VOICE*...

IT CANST BE NAUGHT BUT *HE!*

THEN, 'TIS *HE* WHO MUST KNOW THE ANGER OF *THOR*...

...HE WHO IS *LORD* OF THESE *LOWER DEPTHS*...

"...HE WHO IS CALLED *PLUTO, MASTER OF THE NETHERWORLD!*"

WELCOME BACK TO *HADES,* WARRIOR OF *ASGARD!* AND, ERE THOU RAISEST THINE *URU HAMMER* 'GAINST ME--

--CONSIDER *FIRST* THE PRECARIOUS *SITUATION* IN WHICH THE FEMALE *MORTAL* HATH BEEN PLACED!

JANE... SUSPENDED O'ER A PIT OF *LAVA,* FROM A CHAIN OF *FLAMES!*

FLAMES WHICH SHALL IMPART NO *PAIN* TO HER FLESH... NOR *RELEASE* HER TO THE BUBBLING *PIT*--

--UNLESS THOU GIVE ME *CAUSE* TO HAVE THEM DO *OTHERWISE!*

OBVIOUSLY, THOU HAST A *REASON* FOR THIS MADNESS, OLYMPIAN!

WHAT *THOU* DEFINE AS *MADNESS*, ASGARDIAN, PLUTO CALLS *VENGEANCE*-- A SWEET REVENGE *DENIED* ME BY *ZEUS*.

THE POMPOUS MONARCH OF OLYMPUS *FORBADE* MY VANQUISHING THEE WHEN THE CHANCE WAS *MINE*--

--*BANISHING* ME FROM EARTH TO SIT MY *THRONE* IN THESE STYGIAN *DEPTHS*.*

*SEE *THOR* #164. --ROY.

THUS, DID THE POWER OF *PLUTO* LURE THEE WITH THE WOMAN THOU ONCE DID *LOVE* TO *HADES*--

--THAT WE MAY *RESUME* OUR INTERRUPTED *BATTLE*.

THOU WOULDST *AGAIN* TEMPT THE WRATH OF THY *MONARCH*?

PLUTO SHALT *ADHERE* TO THE DECREE OF ZEUS-- YET *STILL* WILL THE NECTAR OF VENGEANCE BE 'PON MY *LIPS*.

FOR THY *DEATH* SHALT BE ACCOMPLISHED THROUGH *ANOTHER'S* POWER!

BEHOLD, SON OF ODIN!

BEHOLD THE *COUNTE-NANCE* OF MY UNHOLY *ALLY*!

LOKI!!

I SPEAK TO THEE FROM *ASGARD*, MY NOBLE *HALF-BROTHER.*

AND FROM THE *REALM ETERNAL* SHALL I WITNESS THY *DEFEAT!*

WHY DOST THOU FACE ME IN BUT *SPIRITUAL* FORM?

"*BECAUSE*, HATED SIBLING, IN *BRUTE STRENGTH* THOU COULDST *VANQUISH* ME--

"--WHICH IS WHY I DO NOW CONJURE FORTH A *CHAMPION*--

"--SUMMONED FROM THE *DARKEST CAVES* OF THE *GOLDEN REALM!*"

I AM *ULIK*--THE *MIGHTIEST* OF ALL THE *ROCK TROLLS*--HE WHOSE NAME IS SPOKEN IN FEARED *WHISPERS*--

--EVEN TO THE FARTHEST, MOST GODS-FORSAKEN REACHES OF FABLED *ASGARD!*

WHOEVER *BROUGHT* ME TO THIS FLAMING REALM, *STEP FORWARD*--FOR YOU SHALL BE *ULIK'S NEXT VICTIM!*

NAY, ROCK TROLL-- 'TIS NOT HE WHO *DISPATCHED* THEE HERE THAT IS THINE ENEMY...

...BUT RATHER *HE* WHO SHOULD BE *PROMINENT* IN THY *MEMORY.*

THOR!!

WE HAVE BATTLED *BEFORE,* GOD OF THUNDER!*

BUT *THIS* TIME THE FLEDGLING OF ODIN SHALL BE *CRUSHED* 'NEATH THE HEEL OF THE *TROLL!*

*BEGINNING IN *THOR* #137. --R.T.

THE CHALLENGE HAS BEEN *MADE,* THUNDER GOD.

WHICHEVER OF THEE IS *VICTORIOUS* SHALL CLAIM *JANE FOSTER* AS HIS PRIZE, TO DO WITH AS HE *WILL*...AS HIS DEFEATED *OPPONENT* REMAINS EVERMORE A PRISONER OF *HADES.*

IF *BOTH* PERISH IN BATTLE, THEN THE WOMAN SHALL BE RELEASED TO THE *PIT.*

BOTH OF US SHALL *NOT* PERISH, SINISTER ONE!

SHRAAKK!

THIS CONFLICT SHALL *SOON* HAVE ITS BLOODY-HANDED *VICTOR!*

AND HIS NAME SHALL *NOT* BE *THOR*... BUT *ULIK!*

WHIIZZ!!

BUT, EVEN AS ULIK WAS TEAR-ING AT THE WALL, THOR'S FIST CLENCHED ABOUT HIS HAMMER...

...SO THAT, AS THE CRAGGY MISSILE SOARED AT ITS ASGARDIAN TARGET...

THOU BE MORE A WITLESS FOOL THAN I THOUGHT, TROLL--

WHOOM!

--TO ATTEMPT SLAYING THE GOD OF THUNDER WITH MERE STONE!

THE FOOL IS THOR!

FOR THE ROCK WAS BUT TO DISTRACT YOU--

--WHILE I SLAY YOU WITH MY RAW, UNFETTERED MIGHT!

WHAP!

TRAMM!

TRUE, THY STRENGTH BE HERCULEAN, VILLAIN!

BUT NOW 'TIS THOR THOU DOST BATTLE! AND THOR HAST NE'ER YET TASTED DEFEAT!

PLUTO... I BEG OF YOU!

DROP ME INTO YOUR PIT... ANY-THING! BUT DON'T LET THAT MONSTER KILL THOR!

A NOBLE GESTURE OF SELF SACRIFICE, MORTAL.

YET ALSO A FUTILE ONE.

THIS BATTLE OF TITANS SHALL CONTINUE UNTIL ITS CLIMAX--

--AND ONE OF THEM BREATHES HIS LAST.

AND BY MY DARK AND ETERNAL THRONE--

--THAT ONE SHALL BE THOR!

THINK YE SO, PLUTO?

THEN, MAYHAPS, THOU HAST FORGOTTEN THAT I CANST COMMAND THE HEAVENS...

...EVEN HERE, IN THINE DAMNABLE KINGDOM OF FIRE AND SHADOW!

WHAT?! A RUMBLING STORM BEGINS TO RAGE!

YAARRGH! PERHAPS A POWERFUL ENOUGH LIGHTNING BOLT COULD SLAY EVEN THE MIGHTIEST OF TROLLS!

BUT ULIK SHALL NOT WAIT FOR THAT TO HAPPEN--

SPAM!

KRAK!

ZAM!

--NOT WHILE I POSSESS THE *SAVAGE SPEED* TO *EVADE* YOUR ELECTRICAL BARRAGE!

BLAM!

*THE TROLL EVADED **EVERY** SUCCEEDING BOLT.*

*AND WHEN, AT LAST, THE CRASHING THUNDER CALMED TO **SILENCE**...*

WELL, THUNDER GOD-- WHAT SHALL IT BE *NEXT*?

MORE CHANGES IN THE *WEATHER*?

WHATEVER IT DOTH *TAKE*, THOU *TROLL*!

FOR *THIS* SHALT BE OUR *FINAL* BATTLE!

TO THE *DEATH*, ASGARDIAN *WHELP*--

CHONK!

-- DEATH AT THE MERCILESS *CRUSHER BLOWS* INFLICTED BY THE *POUNDERS* OF *ULIK*!

SO *BE* IT, SHAGGY ONE-- *WEAPON 'GAINST WEAPON*!

KA-RA-AAK!

*AND, AS THE NETHERWORLD'S ROCKY WALLS **TREMBLED** WITH EACH BLOW...*

NO! 'TWAS NOT TO *BE* LIKE THIS!

SLAY THE THUNDER GOD, TROLL-- SHOW HIM *NO MERCY*!

WHY DOTH IT TAKE THEE SO *LONG*?!

PERHAPS *PLUTO* WAS THE FOOL... FOR LISTENING TO THAT CUNNING SCOUNDREL *LOKI!*

PERHAPS I SHOULD HAVE *USED* SOME MORE *FORMIDABLE* CHAMPION!

*FOLLOWING PLUTO'S WORDS, THE BATTLE SUDDENLY **HALTED!***

WHAT DID I HEAR YOU *SAY?!*

THAT *YOU* AND THE GOD OF *EVIL* HAVE *USED* THE MIGHTIEST OF TROLLS?!

AYE, ULIK! THOU WERT CALLED TO DO WHAT *THEY* COULD NOT--

--TO *SLAY* THE *GOD OF THUNDER!*

AND SLAY YOU I *SHALL*-- BUT ONLY WHEN *I* SO CHOOSE!

ZRAKK!

FOR *NOW,* ULIK PREFERS TO CLAIM *ANOTHER* FOR HIS *VICTIM*--

--THE ONE WHO SOUGHT TO *MAKE* OF ME A COMMON *PAWN!*

ULIK-- *NO!*

*SUDDENLY **AFRAID**--*

*--PLUTO'S CONCENTRATION ON JANE'S FIERY CHAINS **WEAKENS.***

ALREADY THE LINKS BEGIN TO *VANISH!* IN BUT *MOMENTS* JANE FOSTER SHALL PLUNGE TO HER *DOOM*--

--*UNLESS*...

THOR! IF YOU'D REACHED ME A SECOND *LATER*--

SNAK!

THOU NEEDEST FEAR NO *LONGER*, FAIR ONE.

FOR, THOU BE NOW *SAVED* FROM DEATH BY THE ARMS OF THY... *FRIEND.*

YET, EVEN AS THOR *FLASHED* TOWARD A STONY LEDGE--

--HE GLANCED TOWARD BELOW, TO THE THRONE OF *PLUTO.*

THOOM!

THE TROLL IS *INSANE* WITH ANGER! THERE IS NAUGHT TO DO BUT *FLEE*--

--TO THE *DEEPEST RECESSES* OF MY DARK *DOMAIN!*

BUT, ULIK'S SPEED *BELIED* HIS AWE-SOME SIZE.

PLUTO WILL FLEE *NOWHERE!* PLUTO SHALL ONLY *DIE*...

...AS I *CAST* YOU INTO THE PIT OF YOUR OWN *HELLISH FIRES!*

N-NO!!

THE *ENCHANTED FLAMES* CAN EVEN CONSUME *PLUTO'S* GODLY FORM!

AND, IF *PLUTO* DOTH PERISH, THERE BE *NONE* TO SHOW US THE WAY *OUT* OF *HADES.*

THEN...?

AYE! LEST WE SPEND *ETERNITY* IN THIS STYGIAN REALM--

--LEST WE BE FOREVER *DAMNED* AND DENIED THE LIGHT OF *DAY*--

--THEN THE *MASTER* OF THE *NETHER-WORLD*--

--*MUST PERISH NOT!*

SHOO OOSH!

THE *THUNDER GOD*--

--*SAVING* ME FROM *DEATH!*

YOU WERE A *FOOL* TO HAVE INTERFERED, THUNDER GOD!

FOR NOW YOU HAVE GIVEN ME REASON TO *SLAY* YOU OF MY *OWN* VOLITION...

...AND THE CHANCE TO SEIZE A LIVING *SHIELD* AGAINST YOUR *ATTACK!*

NAY, THOU THING OF *EVIL*-- FOR NOW *MJOLNIR* DOTH *SEEK OUT* THINE EVIL *ESSENCE*--

OH, MY GOD!

SPOW!

--TO *BANISH* THEE FROM THE *NETHERWORLD*--

"--BACK TO *ASGARD,* FROM WHENCE THOU *CAME!*"

LOKI--

-- HE WHO ALSO *USED* ULIK!

ULIK-- KEEP THEE *BACK!*

BUT ALAS--

*--LOKI'S **PRESENT** FATE WAS **NOT** OF PRIMARY CONCERN TO THE THUNDER GOD.*

THOR, SON OF *ODIN,* THOU HAST *SHAMED* THE LORD OF *HADES*--

--BY *SAVING* HIM WHO SOUGHT TO *DOOM* THEE.

THUS, THOU AND THE MORTAL ARE FREE TO *LEAVE* MY DOMAIN...

...SAFE AND UNMOLESTED, ***DEPART*** YE THEN THIS DARK REALM--

--TO THE WORLD THOU CALLEST ***MIDGARD!***

OH.

THOR?!

THEN ***YOU*** MUST HAVE BEEN THE ONE THAT ***CALLED*** ME OUT HERE.

BUT ***WHY?***

MAYHAP, EVEN A ***THUNDER GOD*** CAN BECOME ***SENTI-MENTAL*** OVER FRIENDSHIPS PAST.

VERILY, PLUTO HATH ***ERASED*** ALL MEMORY OF JANE'S HELLISH ***ORDEAL.***

THAT'S ***SWEET*** OF YOU, THOR.

BUT THERE'S A CERTAIN ***DOCTOR*** WHO'LL BE ***UPSET*** IF I'M LATE FOR OUR ***DINNER*** TONIGHT.

THEN, LET US BE ***AWAY*** AND RETURN THEE ***HOME***... 'ERE I TEMPT THE ***IRE*** OF THY ***DR. KINCAID.***

MEMORIES...OF SHE WHOM THOR ONCE DID TRULY ***LOVE.***

BUT, 'TWAS ***WRITTEN,*** THAT ***LADY SIF*** SHOULD BE THOR'S ***BELOVED.***

SIF... NOW ***ONE IN BEING*** WITH JANE FOSTER.

THUS DID THE TURMOIL IN MINE HEART COME TO AN END.

AND NOT ALL THE POWERS IN ***HADES*** CAN EVER BRING IT ***BACK.***

NEXT ISSUE: ***HYPERION--TIMES TWO!***

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THE MIGHTY

THOR®

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HANG UP YOUR HAMMER, THUNDER GOD!

YOU'RE JUST AN ASGARDIAN *ALSO-RAN*, COMPARED TO THE ATOMIC FISTS OF *HYPERION!*

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JOE SINNOTT

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY THOR!™

A SPECIAL SUPER-SENSATION BY...

ROY THOMAS * WAYNE BORING * TOM PALMER

WRITER/EDITOR — GUEST PENCILER — INKER/EMBELLISHER

JOE ROSEN LETTERER * C. GAFFORD COLORIST * J. SHOOTER CONSULTING ED.

FROM A PLOT BY DON AND MAGGIE THOMPSON

PERHAPS THE MOST AWESOMELY OFFBEAT THOR EPIC OF ALL!

CRISIS ON TWIN EARTHS!

DON'T EXPECT TO UNDERSTAND ANYTHING YET, THOROPHILE! GIVE US A FEW PAGES--PLEASE--?

07267

IT IS AN **UNUSUAL** SIGHT INDEED TO SEE **THOR, GOD OF THUNDER,** STRIDE GRIMLY DOWN AN ALMOST-DESERTED STREET IN THE CITY CALLED **NEW YORK.**

IT IS AN EVEN **RARER** OCCURRENCE THAT HE DOES NOT REALIZE HE IS BEING ... **FOLLOWED!**

BUT THEN, THE ASGARDIAN HAS **MATTERS OF MOMENT** ON HIS IMMORTAL MIND:

HOW **STRANGE** IT FEELS, TO WALK AGAIN THESE AVENUES -- ONLY A FEW STEPS DISTANT FROM THE **MORTAL MULTITUDES!**

PERHAPS 'TIS AS **DR. DONALD BLAKE** I SHOULD STROLL THESE STREETS -- YET, I FEEL **SO LITTLE AFFINITY** FOR THAT ROLE, AFTER PLAYING IT SO **SELDOM** THESE LONG MONTHS PAST.

I MEANT TO DALLY HERE ONLY A **FEW MINUTES,** ERE DEPARTING FOR THE **ANDES MOUNTAINS,** WHERE **EARTH'S FATE** HANGS HEAVY IN THE BALANCE.

YET, THE **JUDGMENT OF THE CELESTIALS,** MIMIR SAID, WILL BE STILL NIGH **HALF A CENTURY** IN COMING --

AND, MAYHAP IT WERE **BEST** THAT I FIRST SEE FOR MYSELF, AFTER THE EVENTS OF THE **FALSE RAGNAROK,** THAT EARTH BE **STILL EXISTENT.**

ALSO, 'TIS **HERE** PERCHANCE THAT I SHALL MAKE MY **HOME** FORE'ER AFTER -- SINCE I HAVE **DEFIED** GREAT ODIN IN RETURNING.*

WELL, I SUPPOSE IT BE TIME TO -- **EH?**

HM-M-MM

* SEE ISSUE* 278. --ROY.

WHAT AWESOME **SOUND** BE THIS??

HE WHO **DOGS** THE THUNDERER'S FOOTSTEPS HAS BEEN ON THE VERGE OF **STEPPING FORWARD** FROM THE SHADOWS -- WHEN SUDDENLY **HE TOO** HEARS THE EERIE, EVER-GROWING **HUMMING --**

--AND SEES THE SAME **ASTONISHING SIGHT** AS DOES **THOR!**

MMM

BY THE EIGHT HOOVES OF SLEIPNIR!

'TIS SOME SORT OF **DOORWAY** -- OPENING INTO THE **VERY AIR** ITSELF!

AND **FRAMED** THEREIN -- ONE WHOM I HAVE **FOUGHT BEFORE:**

HYPERION!

BUT, BE HE TRULY **HERE IN MIDGARD** -- OR BUT A **VISION** THAT DOTH PLAGUE ME?

THE SILENT WATCHER GAPES, IF ANYTHING, EVEN MORE WIDELY THAN DOES THOR, AS THE LATTER RECEIVES HIS ANSWER--

I'M NO MIRAGE, AVENGER-- AS YOU'LL LEARN WHEN MY FIST PLUMMETS YOU STRAIGHT INTO THE DAY OF THE WEEK THAT WAS NAMED FOR YOU!

ONLY AN INSTANT IN THIS WORLD--

--AND ALREADY, THOU DOST ACT WITH HOSTILITY?

BUT I SHOULD HAVE EXPECTED NO LESS!

FOR A PASSING MOMENT, I DID WONDER WHICH OF THE TWO HYPERIONS I HAVE KNOWN THOU WERT.

THINE ACTIONS, HOWE'ER, HAVE SPOKEN FOR THEE-- EVEN THOUGH THY VOCABULARY BE IMPROVED.

I KNOW NOT WHERE THY BROTHER MEMBERS OF THE VILE SQUADRON SINISTER MAY BE--

THOK!

--YET, THOU SHALT NEED ALL THEIR HELP, IF THOU WILT STAND 'GAINST MYSTIC MJOLNIR!

WHAT?? YOU STAGGERED ME WITH A MERE HAMMER!?

'TIS MEET THAT THOU SHOULDST BE SURPRISED, MORTAL--

FOR, WHEN FIRST WE MET, MJOLNIR DID MERELY RICOCHET OFF THY MASSIVE CHEST.

STILL, THAT WAS BECAUSE I DID NOT KNOW THY TRUE STRENGTH, TO HURL IT HARD ENOW.

NOW, RETURN TO THINE OWN WORLD-- FOR I'VE NO QUARREL TODAY WITH THEE, AND MORE FATEFUL THINGS TO DO!

OR, RAISE THINE HAND AGAINST ME BUT ONCE MORE -- AND THOU SHALT SEE THAT I'VE BUT DEALT THEE LOVETAPS ON BOTH OCCASIONS!

I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT, THUNDER GOD...!

I'VE *MET* YOU BEFORE, OF COURSE-- BUT I NEVER DREAMED HOW TRULY *POWERFUL* YOU ARE, BECAUSE WE'VE *NEVER FOUGHT* BEFORE.

NE'ER--!? THEN, IF THOU DOST SPEAK *SOOTH*-- THOU ART THE HYPERION OF THE WORLD MY FELLOW AVENGERS DO CALL *OTHER-EARTH*...

...HE WHO BELONGS *NOT* TO THE SQUADRON SINISTER, BUT TO THE *SQUADRON SUPREME!*

THEN *WHEREFORE* IN ODIN'S NAME DIDST THOU *THREATEN* ME WHEN FIRST THOU DIDST--

BECAUSE I HAD TO BE CERTAIN *YOU* WERE WHO YOU SAY *YOU* ARE--

≠UNNHH!≠

SOK!

--AND NOT SOME *COSTUMED PRETENDER!*

NOW I'M *SURE*, BUT YOU'VE MADE ME GOOD AND *ANGRY*--

--SO I THINK I'LL SHOW YOU WHAT *THIS* HYPERION CAN DO-- *WITHOUT* BENEFIT OF EITHER SHAKESPEARIAN PROSE *OR* SLEDGEHAMMER!

HORN OF HEIMDALL!

I GUESS I *DID* RATHER BAIT YOU, NOW THAT I *THINK* OF IT--

STILL, I CAME HERE TO OFFER MY HAND IN *FRIENDSHIP*-- AND YOU *SCORNED* IT.

THUS, I'LL NOW LEARN THE *SECOND* THING I CAME HERE TO FIND OUT:

NAMELY, WERE YOU REALLY *WORTH* MY TRIP TO THIS WORLD, OR *NOT??*

THOR

SO *MIGHTY* IS THE BLOW STRUCK BY THIS HYPERION-- THAT EVEN MINE AWESOME *URU MALLET* BE KNOCKED FROM MINE HAND--

--SOMETHING WHICH HATH *RARELY* HAPPENED, WHETHER MY FOE WERE *MANGOG* OR THE MEREST *MORTAL!*

YET, I HAVE *RE-COVERED* IT NIGH AT ONCE, SO I'LL NOT TURN INTO THE INVALID *DR. BLAKE.*

THOU HAST PROVEN THY *METTLE*, FLAME-HAIR. NOW SAY THY *PIECE*, UNLESS THOU DOST INSIST UPON *RENEWING* THE BATTLE!

I? GREAT ATOMS, IT'S *YOU* WHO--

ENOW! I HAVE A *MISSION* WHICH IS ALREADY *TOO LONG DELAYED.*

SPEAK, I COMMAND THEE--OR I'LL TAKE MY *LEAVE* AND THOU CANST PRATTLE TO THE *EMPTY AIR!*

NO ONE *EVER* SPOKE TO ME LIKE THAT BEFORE, THOR-- WITHOUT LIVING TO *REGRET* IT--

--AND I'LL BE *BLASTED TO PROTONS* IF I'M GOING TO LET *YOU* BE THE *FIRST!*

I'M HERE ON A MISSION *MYSELF*-- AND IT WASN'T MY *OWN* IDEA, EITHER.

I CAME HERE, FOOL THAT I WAS, TO OFFER YOU A ROLE IN A *MOVIE!*

THOU DOST MEAN-- A *FILM!?*

MAY GREAT ODIN PRESERVE ME!

ONLY A BRIEF TIME PAST, MINIONS OF THE *TELEVISION* INDUSTRY DID MAKE LIFE WELL NIGH *UN-BEARABLE* FOR ALL OF ETERNAL *ASGARD.*

AS ALL-SEEING *HEIMDALL* IS MY WITNESS, I SWORE THEN TO HAVE *NO MORE* TO DO WITH THE MOGULS OF SO-CALLED *SHOW-BUSINESS!*

SO *TURN*, I PRAY THEE--

DEPART BACK THROUGH YON *GLOWING PORTAL* WHICH STILL DOTH FLOAT IN THE AIR *BEHIND* THEE, AND--

WAIT! YOU HAVEN'T THE RIGHT TO TURN ME DOWN WITH-OUT A *FAIR HEARING.*

FOR ONE THING, I *DIDN'T* COME HERE JUST TO SEE *YOU*--

--AND I DON'T CARE A *WHIT* ABOUT YOUR PRECIOUS *ASGARD*, EVEN IF IT'S *REAL!*

THEN *WHAT*--?

I'M HERE TO TALK TO *ALL THE AVENGERS*-- AND WHO GAVE *YOU* PERMISSION TO SPEAK FOR *THEM*?

THE AVENGERS!? THOU ART *RIGHT*, OTHER-WORLDER; ONLY MY *FELLOW ASSEMBLERS* MAY SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES.

TELL ME, THEN, ONLY THE *BAREST FACTS* ABOUT THE *FILM* THOU DIDST MENTION--

--AND DOUBTLESS I SHALL *TAKE* THEE TO THEIR *HEADQUARTERS*.

GOOD! I WAS AFRAID THAT IF I JUST *MATERIALIZED* THERE, I MIGHT SET OFF ENOUGH *ELECTRONIC ALARMS* TO START *WORLD WAR III*.

AS YOU PROBABLY DON'T KNOW, I'M A *HOUSEHOLD WORD* IN MY OWN DIMENSION-- MUCH AS *YOU* ARE *HERE*.

THUS, I'M ALLOWING THE *LEAGUE OF NATIONS* THERE TO MAKE A *MOVIE OF MY LIFE*-- AT LEAST, OF THE MORE *PUBLIC* PORTIONS OF IT.

I DON'T NEED *MONEY*, SO MOST OF IT WILL GO TO THE LEAGUE'S *CHILDREN'S FUND*.

"*ONE* SEGMENT OF THE MOVIE IS TO DEAL WITH THE RECENT TIME WHEN SEVERAL OF YOUR FELLOW AVENGERS CLASHED WITH US OF THE *SQUADRON SUPREME*-- AND TAUGHT OUR *WHOLE NATION* A MUCH-NEEDED *LESSON*. *

"WE LEARNED THAT WE, AND THE *CORPORATE POWERS* WE SERVED, COULD NOT PLACE OURSELVES *ABOVE THE LAW*...

*AS SEEN IN *AVENGERS #148*. --ROY.

"...SOMETHING *ALL* MEN NEED TO RE-LEARN FROM TIME TO TIME, AT *BOTH ENDS* OF THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM.

AS A MATTER OF FACT, *YOU* WERE SOMEWHERE *ELSE* AT THE TIME-- SO *YOUR* PART IN THE MOVIE WOULD BE ONLY A *CAMEO*, AT BEST.

THOU HAST MADE THY *POINT*, HYPERION.

VERY WELL, THEN...

COME, AND I SHALL GAIN THEE ENTRANCE TO *AVENGERS MANSION*, ERE I DEPART FOR *OTHER LANDS, OTHER TASKS*.

I MYSELF WISH *NO PART* OF THY VENTURE, AS I SAID-- BUT DOUBTLESS MY *FRIENDS* WILL LISTEN TO THEE, SINCE THY CAUSE DOTH APPEAR *WORTHY*.

IT CERTAINLY *IS*-- AND *THANKS!*

*IF HE WERE NOT DISTRACTED, PERHAPS HYPERION'S **HYPER-VISION** WOULD LONG AGO HAVE REVEALED THE **EAVESDROPPER** WHO EDGES EVER NEARER...*

BUT, BECAUSE HE AND THOR HAVE **OTHER** THINGS ON THEIR MINDS, **NEITHER** OF THEM NOTICES WHEN THE **HIDDEN STRANGER** NOISELESSLY LEAPS HEADLONG **INTO** THE SLOWLY-FADING "**DOORWAY**" BEHIND THEM.

NO, NOT "**LEAPS**"-- **FLIES!**

HMMM... A **FAINT BREEZE** DOTH STIR, OF A SUDDEN.

THAT **REMINDS** ME-- I SHOULD **DISPERSE** MY **DIMENSIONAL PORTAL**...!

BUT, IN A SENSE, IT IS **TOO LATE** FOR THAT...

FOR, ALREADY THE FURTIVE WATCHER IS **EMERGING** IN A WILDLY **DIFFERENT** PLACE--

--TO **SHED** HIS OUTER GARMENTS AND REVEAL THE COLORFUL COSTUME OF-- **ANOTHER HYPERION!?**

HAH! AND HERE I'D GIVEN UP BELIEVING IN **FATE!**

I WAS JUST STANDING AROUND IN **CIVVIES,** WAITING FOR THE RIGHT TIME TO **TOTAL** THE WHOLE PLANET **EARTH**--

AND, NEXT THING I KNOW, I FIND OUT I'VE GOT AN **OTHER-WORLD TWIN**... ONE WHO'S A **GOODY TWO-SHOES,** TO BOOT!

BUT, **NO**-- HE CAN'T BE **EXACTLY** LIKE ME--

OR ELSE HE'D **HATE THE EARTH** JUST AS MUCH AS **I** DO, FOR WASTING THE **ATOMIC WORLD** I WAS BORN ON!*

YEAH, I MAY HAVE PICKED UP A FEW BAD **SPEECH HABITS** FROM HANGING AROUND WITH THOSE CRUMBS OF THE **SQUADRON SINISTER,** AS THEY CALL IT--

BUT, I'M STILL THE **SAME** HYPERION WHO'S GONNA **BLOW UP** THE EARTH ONE OF THESE DAYS--JUST LIKE THE **FIRST CYCLOTRON** BLEW UP **MINE!**

*AS FIRST REVEALED IN ***AVENGERS* 69.** --R.T.

AND, TALK ABOUT YOUR LUCKY BREAKS: **THIS** MIGHT BE JUST THE PLACE TO **DO** IT FROM!

I'M IN A **SATELLITE**-- SOME KIND OF **ORBITING FORTRESS** WHERE THAT OTHER HYPERION MUST COME TO BE **ALONE.**

NO, **WAIT!** IF I'M IN **HIS** DIMENSION, THEN THAT GLOBE DOWN THERE **ISN'T** THE SAME EARTH **I** WANNA DESTROY...

BUT WHAT THE **HEY!** IT COULDN'T HURT JUST TO **KEEP IN PRACTICE,** FOR WHEN MY **MAIN CHANCE** COMES ALONG!

JUST THEN, HOWEVER--

I TRULY *REGRET*, HYPERION, THAT MY *FELLOW AVENGERS* WERE NOT AT HOME TO SPEAK WITH THEE THIS DAY.

I'LL RETURN TO YOUR-- AND THEIR-- EARTH *LATER*.

HUH? WHAT'RE THOSE TWO DOING *HERE*? I THOUGHT--

FOR *NOW*, SINCE YOU'VE EXPRESSED A PASSING INTEREST IN *MY* WORLD--

--PERHAPS I COULD GIVE YOU A *GUIDED TOUR*, IN MY SECRET IDENTITY AS A *NEWSPAPER CARTOONIST*.

NO, ON SECOND THOUGHT, *WHY BOTHER*?

AFTER ALL, *YOU'D* STILL LOOK CONSPICUOUS, EVEN IF *I* DIDN'T.

AYE-- AND, FOR REASONS OF MINE OWN, I PREFER *NOT* TO ASSUME *MINE* ALTER EGO.

THY *LABORATORY* HERE BE OF INTEREST TO ME, ALSO-- FOR I MAY HAVE *NEED* OF SUCH SUPER-SCIENCE ERE LONG.

WHAT *APPARATUS* BE THAT?

THAT?

OH, THAT'S ONLY A *TELEPORTER*, TO BEAM ME-- AND *YOU*, IF YOU WISH-- DOWN TO *OUR* EARTH FROM THIS SATELLITE.

I'M SURE YOU UNDERSTAND THE *PRINCIPLE*-- AT LEAST, IF THEY HAVE "*STAR TREK*" *RE-RUNS* ON YOUR VERSION OF EARTH.

HMM... *SOME* THINGS, IT SEEMS, ARE THE SAME IN *MANY* A UNIVERSE.

YES, I THINK I *SHALL* ACCOMPANY THEE DOWN, IF ONLY FOR A SHORT TIME, BEFORE RE-TURNING TO MINE OWN WORLD.

FINE! MAYBE AFTER-WARDS I CAN HELP YOU WITH *YOUR* MISSION, WHATEVER IT IS.

MAYHAP.

THE NEXT MOMENT, COORDINATES HAVE BEEN SET... A SINGLE STUD IN THE ATOMIC MAN'S BELT PRESSED... AND--

'TIS IN MY MIND THAT I SHOULD *NOT* WASTE EVEN A FEW PRECIOUS SECONDS JOURNEYING TO *ANOTHER* EARTH, THUS!

WHY, THEN, HAVE I *DONE* IT?

CAN IT BE BECAUSE THERE BE SO *FEW* HEROES ON THE EARTH I KNOW-- EVEN AMONG THE *AVENGERS*--WHO BE *MINE EQUAL* IN SHEER *POWER*?

AYE, *PERHAPS!* NOT EVEN *IRON MAN* OR THE *VISION* DO POSSESS THE STRENGTH OF *THOR*, NOR--

TOUCH-DOWN!

BY *ODIN!* THE WORLD DOTH *INDEED* LOOK MUCH THE SAME AS MINE OWN!

ALTHOUGH, IN TRUTH, THY *MOTION-PICTURE CAMERAS* BE SEEMINGLY A BIT MORE *ADVANCED*.

THAT'S BECAUSE *I* SUPPLIED CERTAIN TECHNOLOGICAL ASPECTS FROM MY OWN *DESTROYED WORLD*.

ASGARDIAN, THIS IS *L.L. BURBANK*, THE DIRECTOR OF MY *FILM BIOGRAPHY*.

HELLO, MR. BURBANK!

UH, HELLO-- *HYPERION...!*

I'LL ADMIT, I'M STILL HAVING TROUBLE GETTING USED TO THE IDEA THAT I'M DEALING WITH A *REAL* SUPER-HERO HERE, INSTEAD OF JUST AN *ACTOR* WITH AN EGO BIGGER THAN HIS MUSCLES.

IS THIS *VIKING-LIKE* GENTLEMAN ONE OF THE UM, *AVENGERS* YOU WENT TO FETCH?

AYE, MORTAL! I AM *THOR*, GOD OF THUNDER...

...SON OF *ODIN*, AND HEIR TO THE THRONE OF ETERNAL *ASGARD!*

YEAH, *RIGHT!* WELL, I'VE GOT TO BE OFF TO CHECK SOME *SCRIPT RE-WRITES* BEFORE DINNER.

HEY, HYPERION-- I *LOVE* YOUR FRIEND'S NUTTY *ACCENT!* SEE YOU BOTH LATER!

'TWAS A PLEASURE TO *MEET* THEE!

YEAH... RIGHT!

LOVE IT!

NOW, THOR, *I* MUST LEAVE YOU FOR A MOMENT...

AS YOU CAN SEE, I'VE BROUGHT MY *SPACE STATION* DOWN TO EARTH, THOUGH WE GOT HERE *FASTER*.

I'VE GOT TO GO *CHECK OUT* A FEW THINGS...!

I SHALL AWAIT THEE *HERE...*

...THOUGH, ERE LONG, I MUST RETURN TO MINE *OWN* TASKS.

ON BOARD, HOWEVER, EVENTS ARE ALREADY OCCURRING WHICH MAY DELAY THAT RETURN...

WHAT A NUMB-SKULL I'VE BEEN!

I SHOULD'VE REALIZED RIGHT AWAY-- I CAN LIVE ON THIS EARTH-- TAKE THAT OTHER HYPERION'S PLACE--

--AND STILL DESTROY THE OTHER EARTH--THE ONE THAT OBLITERATED MINE! I'LL--

HUH? THAT SOUND--!

--EVEN BE A WORLD-ACCLAIMED SUPER-HERO HERE--

GREAT ATOMS! WHO THE --?

OF COURSE! YOU'RE THE OTHER HYPERION--THE ONE WHO'S A SUPER-VILLAIN ON THOR'S EARTH!

YOU MUST HAVE FOLLOWED US HERE SOMEHOW.

TELL ME WHAT YOU'RE DOING HERE, BEFORE I--

BEFORE YOU WHAT, GOODY GUMDROP?

HAH! GOT 'IM--WITH HIS OWN LITTLE ZIP-GUN I STUMBLED ACROSS!

I FIGURED THAT, IF HE HAD IT ABOARD, IT MIGHT WASTE 'IM!

FZZZZZ

:UHNNN--!:

HE'S OUT COLD! I OUGHTTA-- NAW! THINK AGAIN, HYPE-BABY!

I MIGHT NEED 'IM LATER--TO TELL ME SOMETHING ABOUT THIS WORLD OR HIMSELF THAT I OUGHTTA KNOW.

HE'LL BE OUT FOR A LONG TIME, SO I'LL--

I FORGOT-- HIS OUTFIT'S MADE OF STRONG SYNTHETICS, JUST LIKE MINE.

WELL, MY ATOMIC VISION IS THE ONE THING ON ANY WORLD THAT'LL CUT IT--

RRIP!

--BESIDES HIS, O' COURSE!

THEN, I CAN USE HIS CAPE TO *TIE 'IM UP*--

AND EVEN IF HE *WAKES UP*, HE WON'T BE ABLE TO *FISSION* HIS WAY OUT, WITH HIS HANDS *BEHIND* 'IM!

I'LL NEED TO *GET MY BEARINGS* ON HIS EARTH FOR A MINUTE, THOUGH--

--SO I'D BETTER DON THESE CLOTHES HE WEARS IN HIS *SECRET IDENTITY.*

NUTTY IDEA, THOUGH! WHY WOULD *ANYBODY* WANNA PRETEND HE'S *WEAKER'N* HE IS?

LESSEE NOW... *THIS* DOOHICKEY MUST BE THE THING THAT WORKS THE *ELEVATOR.*

OHHH

COMIN' TO ALREADY, HUH? MAYBE YOU *ARE* ABOUT AS STRONG AS ME, AFTER ALL!

WELL, THIS *BLINDFOLD* MADE FROM YOUR CAPE OUGHTTA KEEP *YOUR* ATOM-VISION UNDER CONTROL.

YOU'LL NEVER-- GET *AWAY* WITH THIS--!

TELL YA WHAT-- WHY DON'T WE JUST *VOTE* ON THAT IN THIRTY OR FORTY YEARS, *OKAY?*

NOW, WHAT IN BLAZES AM I GONNA *DO* WITH YOU IN THE MEANTIME?

CAN'T LEAVE YOU HERE DURIN' THE *SHOOTING.*

OH YEAH--THIS *TELEPORTATION* GIZMO!

IT WORKS *LOTS* OF WAYS-- AND SINCE I DON'T WANNA SEND YOU BACK TO *THOR'S WORLD*--

--HOW ABOUT *OUTER SPACE* INSTEAD?

YOU WON'T *DIE* OUT THERE--

--BUT I'LL BE ABLE TO *FIND* YOU IF I EVER *NEED* YOU-- WHICH I HOPE I *WON'T.*

BON VOYAGE, BUBU!

NOW, *DOWN THE HATCH*, AS THEY SAY-- AND I'LL SEE WHAT THIS *BRAVE NEW WORLD'S* GOT TO OFFER.

I JUST GOTTA BE CAREFUL NOBODY *TRIPS ME UP* ON SOME LITTLE *DETAIL* WHERE THE TWO EARTHS ARE *DIFFERENT*.

THERE SURE SEEMS TO BE A *LOT* OF 'EM!

UH OH! WOULDN'T YOU KNOW IT! *GOLDILOCKS* HAD THE PLACE *STAKED OUT*.

THERE BE *HYPERION*-- THOUGH FOR SOME REASON HE HATH NOW ELECTED TO DOFF HIS *MASK* AND CHANGE TO MORE *PEDESTRIAN* DRESS.

A *WORD* WITH THEE, SIR?

MARK MILTON-- *HERE!?*

AND WHO'S THAT *COSTUMED DREAM-BOAT* CALLING HIM?

HI, MARK! HOW'S MY FAVORITE *GAG-A-DAY* MAN? AND INTRODUCE ME TO YOUR TALL, LIGHT, AND HANDSOME *FRIEND*, WILL YOU?

I'M, UH, *SORRY*-- I DON'T *KNOW* HIM.

WELL THEN-- I'M *LONNI LATTIMER*, A SORT OF *FRIEND OF HYPERION'S*, YOU MIGHT SAY.

AND I BE *THOR*-- GOD OF THUNDER, AND LORD OF THE LIVING LIGHTNING.

OH? AND WHAT DO YOU DO IN YOUR *SPARE* TIME?

SORRY. JUST A LITTLE *JOKE* THERE.

AFTER ALL, *HYPERION'S* TOLD ME ALL ABOUT HIS TRIP TO *ANOTHER EARTH* AND A GROUP OF SUPER-HEROES THERE CALLED THE *REVENGERS*.

THOU'RT *CLOSE*, MILADY.

MARK MILTON HERE AND I WORK FOR THE SAME *NEWSPAPER*; I'M A *COLUMNIST*, AND HE DOES WHATEVER IT IS THAT *HE* DOES.

THANKS, GAL-- FOR BAILIN' ME OUT WITHOUT *KNOWIN'* IT!

WONDER WHY *SHE* DIDN'T RECOGNIZE ME, EVEN WITHOUT MY *MASK*, THE WAY *THOR* DID.

MUST BE PEOPLE'VE *ACCEPTED* FOR YEARS THAT HYPERION AND THIS CARTOONIST GUY *LOOK ALIKE*-- WHILE *GOLDILOCKS* PUT TWO AND TWO TOGETHER AN' CAME UP WITH *FOUR*.

WELL, ANYWAY, THEY SEEM TO BE *HITTIN' IT OFF!* GOOD!

THAT GIVES ME A CHANCE TO SNEAK AWAY AN' BECOME *HYPERION* AGAIN.

NICE IDEA, THIS "SECRET IDENTITY" SHTICK!

WONDER HOW COME *I* NEVER THOUGHT OF IT!

THEN, WHEN THE EVIL MAN-OF-THE-ATOM HAS *REJOINED* THOR AND LONNI...

AND *NOW*, MY FRIENDS, I MUST *DE-PART* FOR--

NOBODY LEAVES THIS SET-- AT LEAST NOT *ALIVE!*

HUH? WHERE'D *HE* COME FROM??

YOU'VE *RUINED MY LIFE*, HYPERION-- AND YOU MUST *PAY* FOR IT!

DIE-- LIKE THE SUPER-POWERED *SWINE* YOU ARE!!

Z-ZIK!

WHAT IN *BLAZES?* THIS GUY AIN'T IN THE *SCRIPT.*

LET *ME*--!

NO! YOU TWO *STAY HERE* FOR A MINUTE!

THIS ONE'S *MINE!* I'LL BE RIGHT BACK.

STRANGE! HYPERION ACTS AS IF HE DOESN'T *RECOGNIZE* HIS MOST DANGEROUS *ENEMY*--

--EMIL BURBANK! SO WHY ARE YOU ACTING AS IF YOU DON'T *KNOW* ME-- OR WHY I *HATE* YOU?

FOR 300 ATTEMPTS ON YOUR *LIFE*, I DESERVE MORE THAN *THAT!*

BECAUSE I *AIN'T* THE HYPERION YOU *KNOW*, THAT'S WHY.

WHAT? YOU'RE *HYPERION*, ALL RIGHT-- AS SURELY AS I'M *EMIL BURBANK*, BROTHER OF THE FAMOUS *DIRECTOR*--

-- BUT ALSO YOUR *ARCH-FOE*, EVER SINCE YOUR ATOM-VISION ONCE CAUSED MY *HOR-MONES* TO RUN WILD, SO THAT MY *HAIR* WON'T STAY CUT!

LOOK, I NEVER *LAID EYES* ON YOU BEFORE, FELLA.

EH? ARE YOU TELLING THE *TRUTH?*

IF YOU'RE SO *SMART*, YOU CAN UNDERSTAND THAT I COME FROM A *PARALLEL* EARTH-- WHERE I'M THE *STRONG-EST CROOK* EVER TO PUT ON A MASK.

HYPERION-- A *CRIMINAL!?*

NOW YOU'RE CATCHIN' ON!

LISTEN, WE CAN MAKE A *GREAT TEAM* HERE-- MY *BRAWN*, AND YOUR *BRAINS* THAT INVENTED THAT *BLASTER.*

IF YOU'RE ON THE LEVEL-- WHERE DO *I* COME INTO YOUR PLANS?

I THOUGHT YOU'D *NEVER ASK...!*

MEAN-WHILE, BACK ON THE **SET**...

THAT HEAVY **LIGHT**-- **FALLING**--!

I **HAVE** IT, NE'ER FEAR!

YOU **SAVED** ME-- JUST THE WAY **HYPERION** HAS, A MILLION TIMES BEFORE!

A GUY LIKE **YOU** OUGHT TO HAVE HIS **OWN** MOVIE-- ON **ANY** WORLD.

NAY, LONNI LATTIMER. I THANK THEE FOR THE KIND **WORDS,** BUT--

GET THIS **MIKE** ON! **HURRY!**

AND GET THE **CAMERAS** ROLLING!

NEVER MIND THAT THE DIRECTOR ISN'T BACK FROM HIS **SCRIPT CONFER-ENCE** YET!

LOOK WHO JUST POPPED UP OUT OF **NOWHERE!**

IT'S THE WHOLE BLAMED **SQUADRON SUPREME!**

HYPERION'S BACK-- WITH ALL HIS **BUDDIES!** WHY DOES HE LOOK **HOPPING MAD?**

I DO FEAR I BEGIN TO **SUSPECT**...!

PERHAPS YOU **DO,** THUNDER GOD-- BUT IT'S **TOO LATE** FOR YOU.

WHILE MY **COUNTERPART** LEFT ME TO DIE IN OUTER SPACE, **YOU** DECIDED TO MAKE TIME WITH THE **WOMAN I LOVE!**

LOVE!? YOU-- NEVER **TOLD** ME--!

SLAM!

:UNNH!:

AWAY, SLIGHT MORTALS! E'EN ONE WHO BE A **GUEST** 'PON THY WORLD HATH A **LIMIT** TO THE GROSS **INDIGNITIES** THAT MAY BE HEAPED UPON HIM.

IF THOU WILT ACT LIKE **MEN GONE MAD,** THEN IT DOTH REMAIN FOR MIGHTY **MJOLNIR** TO SPEAK FOR ME!

INCLUDING EVEN TO **LONNI,** I SEE!

LONNI!?

I DID NOT *MEAN* TO--!

AH! I REALIZE NOW 'TWAS ONLY A *BACKLASH OF WIND* THAT DID SMITE HER, *NOT* THE URU HAMMER ITSELF.

YOU'RE *RIGHT*, THANK ARGON! SHE'S ONLY *STUNNED.*

SHE'S *COMING AROUND.*

OHHHH--!

HYPERION--DID YOU REALLY *MEAN*--WHAT YOU SAID--?

ABOUT *LOVING* YOU? YES, I GUESS I *DID*--THOUGH I NEVER *REALIZED* IT TILL NOW!

THANK ODIN THOU ART *RETURNED.*

THOU WERT IN *SPACE*, DIDST THOU SAY?

"*YES*, ASGARDIAN--HURLED THERE BY *YOUR* EARTH'S HYPERION, WHO'D BEEN *SPYING* ON US ALL ALONG!

"LUCKILY, *DR. SPECTRUM* HERE DECIDED TO CALL A SPECIAL *SQUADRON MEETING*...

"AND HIS *POWER PRISM* PULLED IN SQUADDERS FROM *ANYWHERE* THEY WERE--EVEN *OUTER SPACE!*"

I SUPPOSE, WHEN I GOT BACK, I WAS IN *NO MOOD* TO PUT UP WITH ANY HINT OF *MONKEY BUSINESS*--NOT EVEN FROM A *THUNDER GOD.*

IT SEEMS THE BOYS AND I STILL HAVE A FEW *ROUGH EDGES* LEFT FROM OUR *DICTATORIAL PERIOD*, SOME MONTHS BACK.*

THEN HE WHO FLEW OFF WITH THE *BEARDED MAN* WAS, IN REALITY--THE *EVIL* HYPERION!?

BY ODIN, I HAD BEGUN TO *SUSPECT* AS MUCH--FOR HIS *SPEECH* WAS NOT LIKE THINE, WHEN HE WAS *OFF HIS GUARD.*

THAT "*BEARDED MAN*," HYPERION, WAS *EMIL BURBANK*--

--AND THE *TWO* OF THEM ARE STILL OFF *TOGETHER*, PLANNING *LORD KNOWS WHAT!*

*SEE *AVENGERS* #147-148. --ROY.

GOOD THING YOU HAD THIS *GIANT ROBOT* JUST ABOUT SET TO *GO*, BURBANK.

IT WAS MEANT TO *DESTROY* YOU, ATOM-MAN; ALL I NEEDED WAS TO STEAL A *DERRICK* FOR SOME *HEAVY LIFTING.*

I NEVER *DREAMED* YOU'D DO THAT *FOR* ME!

YOU'RE STILL CONFUSING *ME* WITH THAT *GOODY TWO-SHOES* TYPE, ARE YOU?

A *FORGIVABLE* OFFENSE, I'M SURE YOU'LL AGREE.

WELL, IT'S *READY TO GO--*

SWOOSH!

"--OR RATHER, *GONE!*"

MOMENTS LATER, IN HOLLYWOOD--

HEY! WHERE'D THAT ECONOMY-SIZE *THREEPIO* COME FROM?

IT'S *RAY BLASTED* HYPERION!

ZZZZZZT

THAT *NORSE GOD* TYPE, TOO, MATE!

GORBLIMEY! THAT MEANS MY *ARROWS* AREN'T EXACTLY LIKELY TO--

ZZZZZT

FEAR NOT FOR *ME,* ARCHER!

FOR, MAYHAP THE SHEER, ATOM-SPAWNED POWER OF *HYPERION* CANNOT BE FULLY O'ERCOME BY MINE ENCHANTED HAMMER-- BUT *NO ROBOT BUILT* CAN--

AH-- *SEE* YE? IT DOTH *TOPPLE*-- LIKE SOME FELLED *REDWOOD!*

NUTS! I SHOULDA *KNOWN* BURBANK WAS JUST A *NUT* WITH DELUSIONS O' *GRANDEUR!*

WELL, WHEN YA WANT SOMETHIN' *DONE--!*

THERE HE IS-- *MY DOUBLE!*

HE WAS *HIDING* WITHIN YON *METAL FRAME!*

ALL THE SAME, I *HAVE* THE ROBOT, MY RED-HAIRED FRIEND.

HE BE *NOT* DESIGNED TO WITHSTAND THE POWER OF THE *THUNDER-BOLT.*

AND *THIS* HYPERION'S NOT DESIGNED TO WITHSTAND MY *FIST!*

IN ADDITION TO MY *NATURAL* STRENGTH, I *TRAIN* EVERY DAY-- WHILE HE OBVIOUSLY JUST *COASTED.*

WHOMP!

KEEP IT UP, HYPERION! WE'RE GETTING SOME GREAT FOOTAGE!

HOLD, SUPER-HERO! SURELY, THOU WOULDST NOT STRIKE HIM ANEW-- MERELY FOR THE SAKE OF A FILM!

THAP!

FILM? WHAT FILM?

THIS WAS A GRUDGE FIGHT, PURE AND SIMPLE.

AND HERE'S EMIL BURBANK, HYPERION-- STILL HIDING IN THE ROBOT'S INNARDS!

GREAT, CAP'N HAWK-- OR DIDN'T IT USED TO BE "AMERICAN EAGLE"?

WHAT'S IN A NAME, LADY?

=ULP!=

WHA--? I THOUGHT YOU'D POLISHED OFF THAT ROBOT!

NOW IT'S FLYING AGAIN-- GRABBING THE PHONY HYPERION AND TAKING OFF WITH HIM!!

'TWAS PROGRAMMED THUS, IT SEEMS.

WAIT! LET GO! BURBANK--!

WELL, LET IT GO, THOR...

I'LL CATCH UP WITH IT LATER--

--AFTER IT'S GOT HIM TOO DIZZY TO STAND UP!

WELL MET! NOW, ABOUT MY RETURN TO MY WORLD...!

WE SURE DON'T HAVE TO DELAY YOU-- ANY OF YOU!

WE GOT ENOUGH FILM FOR TWO MOVIES, AND-- HEY! THAT'S NOT A BAD IDEA!

THEN FAREWELL, AND I SHALL SEE THEE ANON!

THEN, WE PART AS ALLIES, THUNDER GOD?

AYE-- JUST SO LONG AS THOU CANST RESTORE ME TO MINE OWN EARTH!

EASY AS PIE, BIG MAN-- WITH SPECTRUM'S POWER PRISM-- RIGHT, DOC?

BUT NOT, I MAY HOPE, TOO SOON!

NEXT A RETURN TO NORMALCY-- SORT OF!

A FUNNY THING HAPPENED TO THOR ON HIS WAY TO... THE ETERNALS!

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THE MIGHTY

THOR®

IN THE HEART OF LIMBO··

THE HAMMER VANISHES!

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Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY THOR!™

THIS HAMMER LOST!

EVEN AN *IMMORTAL* MAY PLAY UNWILLING HOST TO "THE THOUSAND NATURAL SHOCKS THAT FLESH IS HEIR TO"... INCLUDING THE PANGS OF *SELF-DOUBT.*

NOW THAT HYPERION LIES VANQUISHED,*, MY MIND DOTH BE FREE TO DWELL 'PON THE AWESOME MYSTERY OF THE GREAT *CELESTIALS*--

--THEY WHO, 'TIS SAID, DID *SPAWN* THE VERY RACE OF *MAN* 'PON MY BELOVED EARTH.

IF SUCH BE *TRUE*, THEN *ALL* I HAVE E'ER *BELIEVED* ABOUT MIDGARD AND ITS ORIGINS--

--BE BUT THE FABRIC OF *MYTH*-- OR *WORSE!*

LG303

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*LAST ISH.-- JIM & ROY.

"OF LATE, **MIMIR**, GUARDIAN OF THE ASGARDIAN WELL OF WISDOM, **RETURNED** MY LONG-ERASED **MEMORY** OF A **MEETING** WITH THOSE SPRUNG FROM CELESTIAL EXPERIMENTS...*

"...THOSE WHO DEEMED THEMSELVES--**ETERNALS.** THEY WERE LIKE UNTO **GODS** THEMSELVES, THOUGH IN **TRUTH**, THEY WERE BUT ANOTHER RACE OF **MAN.**

"IN AGES PAST, I CONTENDED WITH THESE ETERNALS IN PERU, 'GAINST MONSTROUS **MUTATES**... EVIL CREATIONS OF A **SECOND** OFFSHOOT OF MAN-- THE DARK-DWELLING **DEVIANTS.**

"AS IF SUCH EVENTS WERE NOT ENOW TO PONDER, MIMIR CONJURED AN IMAGE OF THE MAMMOTH **LEADER** OF THE FOURTH CELESTIAL HOST--

"--**ARISHEM!** HE WHO, E'EN **NOW**, DOTH STAND TWIXT THE TOWERING PEAKS OF THE ANDES, TO PASS **JUDGMENT** O'ER THIS HAPLESS SPHERE.

*SEE THOR ANNUAL #7:-- JIM & ROY.

THOUGH MIMIR DID REVEAL ARISHEM'S JUDGEMENT BE *FIFTY YEARS HENCE...*

STILL I CAN KNOW NO REST TILL THE CELESTIALS BE *DRIVEN* FROM THIS WORLD.

MY HEART YEARNS FOR *BATTLE*, YET 'TIS SHEEREST FOLLY TO STRIVE 'GAINST FOES OF WHICH I KNOW *LITTLE*.

THERE IS BUT *ONE* CHOICE.

TO LEARN THE NATURE OF MINE ENEMIES, I MUST HIE ME BACK--

--*BACK IN TIME*, TO THEIR FIRST VISITATION OF EARTH.

THUS, BY THE MIGHT OF MJOLNIR, LET THE TURBULENT TIMESTREAM *DIVIDE...*

... THAT, MAYHAP, I WOULD FIND THE *ANSWERS* I DO SEEK.

THE NORSE THUNDERER IS ENGULFED IN A SWIRLING STORM OF TEMPORAL DISPLACEMENT...

AND, WITHIN THE RAGING VORTEX...

EH? UNBIDDEN, THE FUNNEL *SLOWS* ITS MOTION!

SOMETHING IS SORELY AMISS.

MY HAMMER! IT HATH VANISHED!

AND WITHOUT MJOLNIR'S POWER, THE VORTEX *DISSIPATES*...

... BECOMING ONE WITH THE *MISTS* OF THIS STRANGE *LANDSCAPE* TO WHICH MY MALLET HATH TRANSPORTED ME.

WHAT *IS* THIS PLACE? WHAT REALM OF SHIFTING SHADES AND SHADOWS DOTH NOW *ENTRAP* ME?

HOW IN MY FATHER'S NAME CAN I *SEEK* MY MISSING HAMMER--

--WHEN MINE OWN *HANDS* ARE BEYOND MY SIGHT IN THIS CLOYING FOG?

I WONDER-- COULD THIS BE THE DOING OF *ARISHEM?*

DO THE CELESTIALS POSSESS POWER ENOW TO OVERCOME E'EN THE *ENCHANTMENTS* OF DIVINE *ODIN?*

MAYHAP, THIS BE THE *FATE* OF *ALL* WHO HAVE CHALLENGED THEM.

BY THE FATES!

MY HAMMER DOTH HURTLE PAST, AND GRASPING ITS THONG--

--MYSELF!

WELCOME TO *LIMBO*, AVENGER... THE CROSSROADS OF ETERNITY!

WHO--?

I--THE *SPACE PHANTOM!* IN THIS LAND BEYOND TIME, ALL THAT *WAS, IS,* OR EVER *WILL BE,* CO-EXISTS...

...WHICH EXPLAINS YOUR BEING ABLE TO SEE YOURSELF JUST NOW.

HOW WERT THOU ABLE TO *FIND* ME WITH SUCH *ALACRITY* WITHIN THESE DANK MISTS!

IT IS *YOUR* MIND WHICH ASSIGNS INTERVALS BETWEEN EVENTS. HERE, THEY DO *NOT* EXIST.

I'LL NOT BE *TAUNTED* BY POMPOUS *RIDDLES*, SPACE PHANTOM.

I HAVE BEEN CAST ADRIFT ON ALIEN SHORES, WHERE *EVERY* MAN IS MINE *ENEMY--UNTIL* HE PROVES OTHERWISE.

IF *THOU* HAST STOLEN MJOLNIR--!

SPARE ME YOUR THREATS, ASGARDIAN. IF YOU WISH TO SEE YOUR PRECIOUS HAMMER AGAIN --*COME.*

THOUGH YOU BELIEVE ME AN ENEMY FOR MY *PAST* MISDEEDS--

--THERE IS *MUCH* YOU MUST LEARN OF MY *MOTIVATION* TO APPRECIATE MY *PRESENT* POSITION.

"I CAME TO EARTH YEARS AGO AND BATTLED THE AVENGERS*, USING MY ABILITY TO *MIMIC* THE FORM OF ANY BEING I *TRANSFERRED* TO LIMBO.

*AVENGERS #2. --JIM & ROY.

"BUT MY POWERS OF TRANSFERENCE *FAILED* AGAINST YOU, THUNDER GOD, AND *I* INSTEAD, WAS THRUST *BACK* INTO LIMBO.

"I *SCHEMED* FOR MONTHS, FINALLY TEAMING WITH THE GRIM REAPER TO EXACT *REVENGE*. THOUGH VICTORIOUS AT ONE POINT, I WAS ULTIMATELY DEFEATED THROUGH *TRICKERY*.*

"YOU ARE AWARE OF THESE EVENTS, BUT YOU'VE *NEVER* KNOWN THE REASON *BEHIND* THEM.

*AVENGERS #108. --JIM & ROY AGAIN.

"YOU SEE, I BELONG TO A UNIQUE SPECIES WHICH MASTERED THE INTRICACIES OF *TIME TRAVEL* LONG BEFORE BOTHERING WITH SUCH PROSAIC PURSUITS AS SPACE TRAVEL.

"DESPITE OUR ADVANCES, WE WERE A **BELLICOSE** PEOPLE, WHO USED OUR CHRONAL CAPACITIES TO WAGE *WAR* AMONG OURSELVES.

"TIME WAS LIKE A VAST *OCEAN* UPON WHICH OUR ARMIES BATTLED END-LESSLY, SLIPPING SECONDS INTO THE *PAST* TO AVOID ATTACK--OR DARTING SECONDS INTO THE *FUTURE* TO LAUNCH ONE!"

"YET, MERE ***TRAVERSAL*** OF TIME DID NOT PRECIPITATE OUR TOTAL ***CONTROL*** OVER IT... AND WE SUFFERED DIRE CONSEQUENCES BECAUSE OF THAT.

"WHENEVER AN INDIVIDUAL ***ENTERS*** OR ***EMERGES*** FROM THE ***TIMESTREAM***, REALITIES DIVERGE, PROBABILITIES SHIFT, AND ALTERNATE PATTERNS OF CREATION COME INTO BEING.

"WE IGNORED THIS, AND CONTINUED TO ***TAMPER*** WITH THE PRIMAL BALANCE THROUGH WARFARE--UNTIL THE UNDERPINNINGS OF EXISTENCE ITSELF SAGGED BENEATH ENDLESS DIVERGENCE.

"I AM NOTHING IF NOT A ***SURVIVOR***. EVEN AS I PLOTTED COUNTLESS BATTLES IN OUR WAR-ROOM, I AWAITED MY CHANCE TO ***FLEE*** THE MADNESS.

"BUT MY CHRONAL CAPSULE WAS ***DAMAGED*** IN ITS ESCAPE FLIGHT, AND I WAS ***STRANDED*** IN ***LIMBO***...

"...WHERE I ENCOUNTERED THIS REALM'S RULER, AND THE ***TRUE*** MASTER OF TIME--***IMMORTUS!***

"WE STRUCK A BARGAIN. IN RETURN FOR WALKING MY UNIVERSE AGAIN, I WOULD BRING ***SUBJECTS*** TO LIMBO FOR HIM TO STUDY...

"...USING THE ***POWERS*** OF PHYSICAL DISPLACEMENT HE HAD ***GRANTED*** ME.

"I ***DESPISED*** HIM--BUT DID HIS BIDDING. UNDER HIS AUTHORITY, I INFILTRATED EARTH AND THE AVENGERS...

"...USING THAT CHANCE TO ***SCRUTINIZE*** EARTH SENSING IF IT WERE RIPE FOR ***CONQUEST*** BY MY PEOPLE, WHEN OUR WORLD ***DIED*** OF TIME-INDUCED ***ENTROPY.***"

ENOUGH--***ENOUGH*** OF THIS PRATTLE. PATIENTLY HAVE I LISTENED TO THY TALE OF WOE--BUT HOW DOTH IT CONCERN ME?

YOU NEEDN'T BE PATIENT ANY LONGER--WE'VE REACHED OUR GOAL.

AND NOW, PREPARE, ASGARDIAN...

...PREPARE FOR A SIGHT THAT WILL ***SHOCK*** EVEN ***YOUR*** GOD-LIKE SENSES!

BEHOLD... MY HOMEWORLD-- PHANTUS! EVEN AS WE WATCH, IT SLIPS FURTHER INTO LIMBO AS A RESULT OF OUR INSANE WARFARE.

DOUBTLESS, YOUR HAMMER WAS ATTRACTED BY THE VORTEX AT MY PLANET'S CORE, WHICH LEADS TOWARD REAL-TIME, AND WAS PULLED IRRESISTIBLY THERE.

MAYHAP IN LIMBO, E'EN MY FATHER'S DIVINE EDICT THAT MY HAMMER RETURN TO MY HAND BE AS MEANINGLESS AS NATURAL LAW.

THOUGH MY PEOPLE ARE CHOICEST FOOLS, THOR-- STILL I MUST SAVE THEM... EVEN FROM THEMSELVES.

BUT HOW CAN I AID THEE IN THY QUEST IF MJOLNIR BE LOST TO ME?

WE SHALL JOURNEY TO MY PLANET'S *CENTER* AND RETRIEVE IT!

BUT BE *WARY*, FOR THE CHRONAL CONFLICTS *CONTINUE* BELOW.

SPACE PHANTOM, OF WHAT *SIGNIFICANCE* BE SUCH FLOATING MATTER--

--RELEASED FROM YON HURTLING AIRSHIP?

BE IT *HARMLESS* DEBRIS...OR SOMETHING MORE *SINISTER*?

QUICKLY-- MOVE AWAY! THOSE CLOUDS HAVE BEEN SEEDED WITH *VIBRO-MINES*--

--THAT INSTANTLY *SHATTER* ANY OBJECT WHICH TOUCHES THEM!

HE'S BEEN *STRUCK!* IF THOR DIES, MY MISSION IS *DOOMED* TO FAILURE!

AAARRGGH!

WAIT... IT'S AMAZING! SUCH A *CONCUSSION* WOULD HAVE SHAKEN APART A SHIP'S HULL MADE OF OUR *STRONGEST* METAL. YET YOU --

I BE MADE OF STERNER STUFF I AM BUT DAZED...

...AND *ANGERED!* THOR IS *NOT* A GOD TO TURN THE OTHER CHEEK WHEN *ATTACKED*-- WITH OR *WITHOUT* MINE HAMMER.

THY WORLD HATH THE ASPECT OF *RAGNAROK* ITSELF.

NO SOONER DO I ALIGHT 'PON ITS SURFACE...

...THAN I AM *ATTACKED*--ENVELOPED IN THIS THICK, GELATINOUS SUBSTANCE!

PLASMA BOMBS!!

IF I'M HIT--

--I'LL BECOME COMPLETELY DEHYDRAT... *UUHHH...*

NO MOISTURE-SAPPING SHEATH SHALL ENTRAP ME WHILE MINE IMMORTAL LIMBS CAN *SHRED* THIS CONSTRAINING GEL BEFORE IT HARDENS!

MY BLOOD DOTH *BOIL* AT THE WAR-BORN *IGNORANCE* I SEE BEFORE ME!

ENOW--ENOW, I SAY! AN END TO THIS MADNESS!!

'TIS *FOLLY* TO WAGE WAR WHILE THY PLANET'S VERY *EXISTENCE* IS SORELY IMPERILED!

MY WONDROUS **CAPE** MUST NEEDS SERVE IN MJOLNIR'S **ABSENCE.**

WITH IT, I SHALL **GATHER** THESE SO-CALLED VIBRO-MINES...

...AND SEND THEM FORTH TO **SMITE** THOSE WHOSE FOOLISH WARS--

--HAVE NOW INVOLVED THE SON OF ODIN 'GAINST HIS **WILL.**

IF 'TIS BATTLE THEY SEEK--

--SO **BE** IT!

SHINY PACKETS OF DESTRUCTION ***STRIKE*** *THEIR UNKNOWING TARGET.*

AND SUBJECTIVE SECONDS LATER, ONE ***LESS*** *DRONE-CRUISER STALKS THE TWILIGHT SKIES.*

WITH MURDEROUS IMPACT, THE AVENGING IMMORTAL'S MIGHTY FRAME **TOTALS** THE TANK.

THROOM

ALIEN METAL CREAKS AND GROANS AS HIS STEELY FINGERS **GRASP** A HUGE CHUNK OF THE WRECKED VEHICLE.

LIKE SOME MAD **SCULPTOR** REALIZING HIS **FINAL** MASTERPIECE, THOR'S EVERY MOVEMENT BETRAYS AN **INNER** POSSESSION.

AND INCREDIBLY-- **IMPOSSIBLY**-- TONS OF MISSHAPEN ARMOR PLATING ARE **COMPRESSED** BY HIS MAMMOTH ARMS...

...COMPRESSED INTO A MASSIVE **BALL**, THEN EXPERTLY **MOLDED** INTO--

--A CRUDE, MAKE-SHIFT-- **HAMMER!**

AHHH, TO ONCE MORE FEEL HAMMER IN HAND! TRULY WAS I **BORN** TO WIELD **MJOLNIR.**

THOUGH MY FATHER'S ENCHANTMENT BE **MISSING** FROM THIS FAST-HEWN WEAPON-- **STILL** 'TIS BACKED BY THE **POWER** OF THOR...

BWOOM

... AND ON ALL THE WORLDS OF MEN, **N'ER** HATH THAT NOT BEEN **ENOUGH.**

FIRES OF SURTUR!

MUST I CONTEND FOREVER 'GAINST A WORLD I HAVE PLEDGED TO SAVE?!

BROK

TARGETS IN POSITION-- RELEASE GRAVITON-BOMBS!

THE DETONATION IS UTTERLY SOUNDLESS. BUT THOR IS INSTANTLY SUBJECT TO A GRAVIMETRIC ATTRACTION AKIN TO THAT OF A NEUTRON STAR--

--WHICH FORCES THE QUIVERING IMMORTAL FLAT ON THE GROUND...

...WHERE HE STARES HELPLESSLY AT RUSHING DEBRIS PULLED IRRESISTIBLY DOWN BY THE INCALCULABLE INCREASE IN LOCAL GRAVITY.

AND HE IS QUICKLY BURIED FROM VIEW BY AN EVER-COMPACTING MASS OF UNIMAGINABLE TONNAGE...

FOR LONG MOMENTS, THE MOUND IS STILL -- SILENT WITH THE FINALITY OF THE **GRAVE**. TRULY WOULD ALMIGHTY ODIN **WEEP** TO GAZE UPON SUCH AN IGNOBLE **TOMBSTONE** FOR HIS PROUD AND PASSIONATE SON.

SUDDENLY, SOMETHING STIRS. AND WHERE NO LIVING BEING SHOULD BE ABLE TO RISE -- ONE **DOES!**

ONE WHOSE GODLY SOUL WILL KNOW NO FINAL REST, LEST IT BE WITH BELOVED MJOLNIR AT HIS SIDE.

AWAY -- AWAY, YE FOUL HINDRANCES! I WOULD BE FREE!

NOT SINCE FIRST FACING THE SPACE-FARING **RIGELLIAN COLONIZERS** HAVE I BEEN SO BESET BY WEAPONS OF SUCH INFINITE **VARIETY.**

BUT THOR DID **PREVAIL** ON THAT DEADLY OCCASION...

...AND HE SHALL YET PREVAIL TODAY!

KRATCH

THRAK!

QUICKLY, AVENGER, FOLLOW ME THROUGH HERE!

I STAND AMAZED AT THINE ABILITY TO REMAIN UNSCATHED BY THE CARNAGE AROUND YE.

LIMBO IS MY HOME, NOW, THOR. MANEUVERING HER MISTY PASSAGES AND BYWAYS IS SECOND NATURE TO ME.

AS IT IS TO THEM -- STAY BACK, I'LL HANDLE THIS.

NAY.

NAY! MY RAGE DOTH MOUNT WITH EACH NEW ASSAULT AND MUST NEEDS SEEK RELEASE!

BOM!

OUR WAY IS CLEARED-- THERE SHALL BE NO FURTHER DELAY.

BUT ONE QUESTION HAVE I FOR THEE... WHERE ART THOU TAKING US?

TO YOUR HAMMER, THOR, AND WITH IT, THE MEANS TO MY WORLD'S SALVATION--

--AND YOUR OWN, OF COURSE.

I GROW *IMPATIENT* WITH YON ENDLESS ROWS OF MACHINERY. WHAT BE THIS PLACE, AND HOW DOTH IT CONCERN *MJOLNIR?*

WITHIN THIS COMPLEX IS THE ALL-IMPORTANT *TERMINAL* THAT WILL TAKE YOU STRAIGHT TO PHANTUS' *CORE*...

...TO THE PRECISE *JUNCTURE POINT* BETWEEN THE WORLD HALF THAT EXISTS IN REAL-TIME *AND* THE HALF THAT EXISTS IN LIMBO.

HERE IS THE ENTRANCE. ALL YOU MUST DO IS LEAP IN AND THE *COSMOS* WILL DO THE REST.

FAREWELL, MY ...FRIEND.

I LIKE IT NOT, YET THE LUXURY OF CHOICE BE *DENIED* ME.

*THOR DROPS FOR A SEEMING ETERNITY, UNTIL ALL AT ONCE THE VERY FIBER OF HIS BEING IS **SHREDDED** BY UNKNOWN FORCES...*

THE FOOL HAS FALLEN INTO THE *TRAP* AS PLANNED --BAITED WITH MY *LIES* ABOUT HIS HAMMER.

HIS IMMORTAL BODY WILL SERVE AS A TIMELESS *CORK--PLUGGING* THE HOLE FROM *REAL-TIME* INTO *LIMBO*...

...AND MY WORLD WILL SLIP *BACK* INTO ITS OWN SPACE/TIME CONTINUUM.

BY ALL THE FATES!

THAT MY HAMMER BE NOT HERE HATH DWINDLED TO *UNIMPORTANCE* IN THE FACE OF WHAT *NOW* DOTH CONFRONT ME!

HERE I AM--*TRAPPED* AT THE *NEXUS* OF TWO REALMS... PARTLY IN *BOTH* YET WHOLLY IN *NEITHER.*

TIME'S PASSAGE HATH BEGUN FOR *ONE* SIDE OF ME...

...A SIDE FOR WHICH *SIXTY SECONDS* HAVE ELAPSED SINCE LAST I GRASPED *MJOLNIR.*

THUS, BY THE ENCHANTMENT NOBLE ODIN HATH ORDAINED *THAT* SIDE OF MY BODY HAS BEGUN TO *CHANGE* INTO MY FRAIL, MORTAL COUNTERPART--

--*DR. DONALD BLAKE!*

NEXT ISSUE:

TITANS IN THE TIMESTREAM!

STILL ONLY 35¢

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THE MIGHTY

THOR®

BEHOLD THE POWER OF TEMPUS, THE GOD-KILLER!

THOUGH I HAVE BEEN STRIPPED OF MY MYSTIC HAMMER, STILL SHALL THOR BATTLE THEE-- UNTO DEATH!

Stan Lee presents the 200th Journey into Mystery of the Mighty Thor®

RITES OF PASSAGE

MARK GRUENWALD / RALPH MACCHIO / WRITERS * KEITH POLLARD / PABLO MARCOS / ARTISTS * NOVAK, LETTERER / SEAN, COLORIST * JIM SHOOTER / ROY THOMAS / EDITORS

THERE IS A PLACE BEYOND SPACE AND TIME THAT IS ADJACENT TO ALL SPACE AND ALL TIME! IT IS CALLED BY THOSE WHO DARE TO SOJOURN THROUGH IT--LIMBO! INTO THIS NEBULOUS REALM HAS COME THE THUNDER GOD THOR TO SEEK KNOWLEDGE OF A DANGER BEYOND HIS IMMORTAL COMPREHENSION. BUT INSTEAD, HE FALLS PREY TO A DANGER OF MORE IMMEDIATE CONCERN...
... A DANGER FOUND AT THE VERY HEART OF A LIMBO-LOST PLANET... A DANGER WROUGHT BY THE TREACHEROUS SPACE PHANTOM!
BY THE FATES! I BE TRAPPED AT THIS JUNCTURE 'TWIXT TIME AND LIMBO -- AND THE HALF OF MY BODY THAT JUTS INTO REAL-TIME DOTH CHANGE TO MY MORTAL FORM -- A FORM THAT CANNOT SURVIVE THE PRESSURES OF A PLANET'S CORE!
LG353

THE SPACE PHANTOM HATH *LIED* TO ME! MY MYSTIC MALLET DOTH *NOT* BE MIDST THIS SWIRLING *VORTEX!*

AND *WITHOUT* MIGHTY MJOLNIR, I CANNOT *STEM* THE INEXORABLE *METAMORPHOSIS* INTO DONALD BLAKE!

WITH EACH PASSING *INSTANT,* I SINK FURTHER INTO THE *MAW OF DEATH.*

*MEANWHILE, ON THE PLANET PHANTUS' **SURFACE**, THE SPACE PHANTOM OBSERVES THE FRUITS OF HIS **MACHINATIONS.***

WITH THOR'S IMMORTAL BODY TO *PLUG* THE NEXUS AT PHANTUS' TEMPORALLY-UNSTABLE *CORE...*

...MY HOMEWORLD WILL BE *DELIVERED* OUT OF THE LIMBO OUR ENDLESS CHRONAL WARS HAVE THRUST US INTO.

BUT *WAIT*-- MY MONITORS PERCEIVE *NO* CHANGE IN PHANTUS' PRECARIOUS *POSITION!*

THAT MEANS THE IMMORTAL'S BODY IS *NOT* HAVING THE CALCULATED *EFFECT.* BUT HOW--? I MUST SET MY FOCUS ON *THOR.*

DAMN! SOMETHING IS CAUSING HIM TO *LOSE* HIS GODLY ATTRIBUTES!

THOR, WHAT IS *HAPPENING* TO YOU?

IN ACCORDANCE WITH ALL-FATHER ODIN'S *ENCHANTMENT,* IF MY HAMMER BE *GONE* FROM MY GRASP *SIXTY SECONDS* FULL...

...MINE IMMORTAL FRAME BE *SUPPLANTED* BY THAT OF A *MORTAL!*

HOW WAS I TO KNOW *THAT?* SECONDS DO NOT *PASS* IN TIMELESS LIMBO, BUT THEY *DO* AT THE NEXUS TO *REAL-TIME!*

I KNOW NOT *WHY* I HAVE BEEN DECEIVED, PHANTOM--BUT IF THOU DOST SEEK MY *AID,* THOU MUST FIRST *RESCUE* ME!

IN TRUTH, IF I WOULD BE **SAVIOR** OF MY PLANET, I HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO **FREE** THE ASGARDIAN WHILE THERE'S STILL **TIME.**

A RELUCTANT PUSH OF A **BUTTON...**

...AND A GOLD-TRESSED GODLING IS **SNATCHED** BY A TELEPORTER AND **DEPOSITED** BEFORE THE CRINGING PHANTOM.

A **TREMOR** PASSES THROUGH MY BEING. BE THIS **MORTALITY...?**

NAY--THE SON OF ODIN BE **WHOLE** AGAIN!

SAVED, 'TWOULD SEEM, BY HE WHO **IMPERILED** ME.

AND NOW FOR THEE, CONNIVING **SCOUNDREL**--

TELL ME WHERE THOU HAST **SECRETED** MY MYSTIC HAMMER--

--OR FACE THE UNFETTERED **FURY** OF A GOD'S **WRATH!**

ULP

IF THIS BE YET ANOTHER **DECEIT**--!

IT IS NOT, I-I **SWEAR** IT.

THE **TRUTH** IS, THOR-- I-I DON'T **HAVE** YOUR HAMMER. B-BUT I THINK I KNOW WHERE IT IS!

I WILL HELP YOU **FIND** IT...

...IF **YOU** WILL PROMISE TO HELP MY **PLANET.**

'TWOULD SEEM THOU BE IN NO POSITION TO BARGAIN. WHY DIDST THOU DECEIVE ME EARLIER WHEN THOU NEED ONLY HAVE ASKED FOR MY INTERVENTION ON THY PLANET'S BEHALF?

MY CULTURE ***VALUES*** TRICKERY AND COERCION. THERE IS NO HONOR IN ***NEGOTIATION.***

VERILY, THIS ALIEN'S ***ETHICS*** SIT POORLY WITH MINE ***OWN.*** STILL, NO PLANET SHALL ***PERISH*** IF IT BE IN THE ODINSON'S POWER TO ***SAVE*** IT.

LEAD ME TO MINE ***HAMMER***, AND THE MIGHT OF MJOLNIR SHALL ***AID*** THEE.

LEAVING THE LABORATORY, THE ASGARDIAN AND THE PHANTOM ***EMERGE*** AMIDST THE DIN OF TIME-DISRUPTING ***CARNAGE...***

...CARNAGE WROUGHT IN A ***WAR*** THAT PERMEATES EVERY STRATUM OF ***REALITY*** HERE AT THIS ***MOMENT*** OUT OF TIME...

WALK ***SWIFTLY***, AVENGER -- I KNOW A SHORTCUT TO THE WORLD'S ***EDGE.***

SOON, THE UNEASY ALLIES STAND ON THE ***RIM*** WHERE PHANTUS PHASES OUT OF ***LIMBO...***

THIS IS WHERE MY PLANET ***ENDS***, ASGARDIAN.

THEN ***PREPARE*** THYSELF, SCHEMER -- FOR THE SON OF ODIN WOULD ***QUIT*** THIS TIME-TORN WORLD.

THE MADDENING ***SILENCE*** OF THE TIMELESS REALM NOW HATH NEW ***ALLURE.***

WITH A RIPPLE OF GODLY **THEWS**, THOR BOUNDS OFF THE **EDGE** OF THE WORLD INTO THE SWIRLING REACHES **BEYOND**...

AND **NOW**, VARLET-- LEST I **STRAY** FROM THE PATH-- **WHERE** SHALL WE LOOK FOR MJOLNIR?

AS I SAID, **I** AM NOT CERTAIN OF YOUR HAMMER'S PRECISE **WHEREABOUTS**...

...BUT THERE IS **ONE** WHO DWELLS IN LIMBO FROM WHOM **NOTHING** ESCAPES NOTICE--**IMMORTUS**, MASTER OF TIME.

"**IMMORTUS?** BUT WHEN LAST I SAW SAID **MAGE**,* HE CLAIMED THAT THE DEATH OF **KANG** WAS ALSO **HIS** UNDOING..."

THE CIRCLE IS BROKEN. WE ARE FREE.

*__AVENGERS__ #143. --JIM AND ROY.

IMMORTUS--**DEAD?** HAHA-HAHA! HOW CAN SOMEONE BEYOND **TIME** NOT BE BEYOND MERE **DEATH?** IMMORTUS MEANS **IMMORTAL**, IMBECILE!

STILL THY **TONGUE**, KNAVE, OR I--

FORGIVE ME, THOR. IT'S JUST THAT I DID NOT KNOW MY **MASTER** ENJOYED **DECEPTION** AS MUCH AS **I**.

NO, AVENGER, IMMORTUS SHALL BE **ALIVE** AS LONG AS **TIME ITSELF** ENDURES. AND IF **ANYONE** CAN HELP YOU, IT IS **HE**.

WE SHALL **REACH** OUR DESTINATION PRESENTLY.

HOW MUCH **LONGER** THEY TREK THROUGH THE ENDLESS HAZE, THOR DOES NOT **KNOW,** ANY MORE THAN HE KNOWS THE NATURE OF THE **SOLID FOG** BENEATH HIS FEET.

BUT **FINALLY,** THE MISTS PART AND HIS IMMORTAL EYES WIDEN IN **AWE** FOR THE **SECOND** TIME SINCE HE ENTERED THIS ENIGMATIC REALM.

BEHOLD, THUNDER GOD-- THE CASTLE OF...

IMMORTUS!

THOUGH I HAVE BEEN HERE ONCE **BEFORE,** NE'ER HAVE I SEEN YON EDIFICE FROM **WITHOUT.** ITS DESIGN DEFIES **GRAVITY** ITSELF.

THOUGH I HESITATE TO APPROACH *UNINVITED*, LET US ALIGHT IN THE *COURTYARD*...

FOLLOW *ME*, ASGARDIAN. I AM *FAMILIAR* WITH THE CITADEL'S WALKWAYS...

PHANTOM, IF THOU BE *ACQUAINTED* WITH THIS PLACE AS THOU *SAYEST*...

HOW DOST THOU *ACCOUNT* FOR YON *BEING* MATERIALIZING BEFORE ME?

WHAT?

HOLD, TIMELINGS! NO BEING MAY *TRESPASS* IN IMMORTUS' ABODE UNBIDDEN. SO SPEAKS **TEMPUS**, KEEPER OF THE CASTLE!

HE HATH THE SEEMING OF A *FROST GIANT*.

E'EN *MINUS* THE MIGHT OF MJOLNIR, I WILL *CHALLENGE* HIM FOR MY RIGHT OF PASSAGE!

HAVE A *CARE*, THOR. IMMORTUS HAS INVESTED HIS GUARD WITH TIME-SPAWNED *POWER*!

WITH A CASUAL SWING OF HIS QUARTZ-LIKE **BLUDGEON**, TEMPUS **SWATS** THE AIRBORNE ASGARDIAN...

...LIKE SOME BOTHER-SOME ***INSECT...***

...AND SENDS HIM ***REELING*** INTO THE ROCK-HEWN CASTLE WALL.

IN TRUTH, I BE ***UNACCUSTOMED*** TO BATTLE WITHOUT MINE HAMMER.

NOW, INTRUDER: ***VACATE*** THESE PREMISES AT ***ONCE*** OR I WILL BE FORCED TO DEAL WITH YOU ***HARSHLY.***

I SAY THEE ***NAY,*** GIANT.

NO BEING MAY SMITE THE GOD OF THUNDER WITH ***IMPUNITY!***

MIDST THIS DEARTH OF SPIRES, ***ONE*** SHALL NOT BE MISSED.

HAVE AT THEE, TEMPUS!

WITLESS TIMELING--DO YOU THINK A MISSILE OF MERE *STONE* CAN REND A BEING WHOSE *EXISTENCE* IS LIKE UNTO *ROCK* ITSELF!?

OH, THAT IT *WOULD* END MY LIFELESS EXISTENCE OF *SERVITUDE* TO HIM WHO *CREATED* ME!

VOL THOOM

'TWOULD SEEM TEMPUS WOULD *DISOWN* HIS VERY *REASON-TO-BE!*

GET THEE *BEHIND* ME, PHANTOM! I SHALL *SHIELD* THEE WITH MY GODLY FRAME!

TRY *HARDER*, LITTLE ONE!

I ADMIRE YOUR *VALOR* AT THE SAME TIME I BEMOAN YOUR *FUTILITY.*

NO MORE *TRICKS?* THEN I MUST SUBJECT YOU TO THE ONE *FORCE* TO WHICH I AM RUEFULLY *IMMUNE...*

...THE RAMPANT RAVAGES OF *AGING!*

I KNOW NOT THE *NATURE* OF THIS OPTIC-BOMBARDMENT. BUT E'EN THINE *ICY GLARE* CANNOT AFFECT ONE *IMMORTAL BORN!*

SO YOU *TOO* DO NOT KNOW THE *LUXURY* OF NATURAL *DEATH*. BUT WHILE *I* AM FORE-DOOMED TO LIFE-WITHOUT-CEASE, *YOU* MAY YET BE VANQUISHED BY A TURBULENT *TIMESTORM!*

TEMPUS' *MALLET* CONTROLS THE VERY *ELEMENTS* OF LIMBO...

...MUCH AS MJOLNIR CONTROLS ELEMENTS *ATMOSPHERIC!*

STILL, NO *STORM* SHALL THOR CALL *MASTER!*

WHATE'ER THE *ELEMENT*-- WHATE'ER THE *FORCE*--

THOR SHALL ENDURE!

IMPOSSIBLY, THOR INCHES *THROUGH* THE TEMPORAL TEMPEST *UNTIL*...

THOUGH THE *STORM* HATH STOLEN ALL *SIGHT*, I *FEEL* MY ADVERSARY'S *FOOT* BEFORE ME!

FALL, GIANT!

NO LONGER CAN A MERE *UPROOTING* DESTROY ME.* MY MASTER HAS *SEEN* TO THAT.

*AS IT DID IN *GIANT-SIZE FF #2.* --JSIRT.

IN *TRUTH*, TEMPUS, I WISHED ONLY TO *ABATE* THY STORM--

--AND REDUCE THEE TO MY STATURE!

NOW, MONSTER-- FEEL THE POWER OF THE HAND THAT WIELDS MATCHLESS MJOLNIR!

WOULD THAT IT WERE POWER ENOUGH--

--THAT I'D BE UNABLE TO LIFT MY HAND AGAINST YOU!

LET US END THIS WEARISOME CHARADE.

LET ME DISPATCH YOUR LIFE IN A MANNER THAT BEFITS YOU.

TEMPUS HATH LET HIS WEAPON STRAY FROM HIS GRASP!

THOUGH ITS MASS DWARF THAT OF MJOLNIR-- NO HAMMER DOTH BE BEYOND THOR'S MIGHT TO WIELD!

AND MAYHAP TEMPUS' OWN WEAPON BE THE KEY TO HIS UNDOING!

HOISTING THE MOUNTAINOUS MALLET ABOVE HIS HEAD AS IF IT WERE NO MORE THAN A SERPENT'S TOOTH, THOR STRIKES A BLOW THAT SENDS TREMORS THROUGHOUT IMMORTUS' CASTLE.

I HAVE GIVEN TEMPUS THE OBLIVION HE *CRAVED*. I PRAY IT BE TO HIS *LIKING*.

TEMPUS' DEATHS NEVER *LAST* VERY LONG. WE MUST *HURRY*.

I SHALL COMMANDEER THIS *WEAPON* AND FASHION A HASTY *ENTRANCE!*

BY MIMIR'S MOCKERY! THIS CASTLE'S INTERIOR BE AT *GREATER* ODDS WITH NATURE THAN ITS *FACADE!*

GRAVITY, LIKE *ALL* NATURAL LAW, IS *SUSPEND-ED* HERE.

DO NOT CONCERN YOURSELF WITH SUCH *TRIFLES*.

HOLD! WHAT BE THIS CLAMOR BEYOND THE WINDOW? 'TIS *I*-- IN BATTLE WITH THE *FRANKENSTEIN* MONSTER!

BUT THAT OCCURRED HERE O'ER A *YEAR PAST!*

*AVENGERS # 132. -- J.S./R.T.

SUCH IS THE NATURE OF *TIME-LESS-NESS...*

...THAT THE *PAST* IS EVER *PRESENT*.

HOW CANST THOU **DWELL** IN A REALM WHERE **LOGIC** AND **NATURE** HAVE LOST THEIR **REASON?**

ONE LEARNS TO **ACCEPT** THE SEEMING PARADOXES OF LIMBO, OR ONE SOON GOES **MAD.**

THE PHANTOM LEADS THE VISITOR THROUGH A **LABYRINTH** OF ROOMS AND CORRIDORS, UNTIL...

BEFORE US LIES THE **MASTER'S** CHAMBERS. **YOU** MAY LEAD FROM HERE. I CONFESS NO **FONDNESS** TO SEE HIM I SERVE.

GREETINGS, ASGARDIAN!

THEN THE PHANTOM DID **NOT** LIE. IMMORTUS INDEED DOTH **LIVE!**

BUT IF THOU BE A **LATER** SELF OF **KANG** AS THOU HAST SAID,* AND KANG BE **DEAD**--THEN HOW--?

*GIANT-SIZE AVENGERS #3.--J&R.

MY LIFE IS **NOT** A CIRCLE AS I ONCE DESCRIBED IT, THOR. IT IS MORE LIKE UNTO A **TREE...**

THOUGH ONE **BRANCH** HAS BEEN **PRUNED**, THE TREE STILL **STANDS.**

NOW THEN. I BELIEVE YOU WERE LOOKING FOR **THIS...?**

HERE. I'LL **TRADE** YOU...

...FOR MY GUARD'S FRAGMENTARY **IMPLEMENT.**

IT FADES FROM MY **GRASP!**

THOU DOST **TOSS** MINE HAMMER AS IF ODIN'S ENCHANTMENTS WERE ABSENT!

THE ONLY ENCHANTMENTS HERE ARE **MY OWN,** GODLING.

I REJOICE THAT I NEED NOT **BATTLE** THEE TO RECLAIM WHAT IS **MINE**. BUT WHY DIDST THOU **STEAL** MINE HAMMER?

I DID NOT **STEAL** IT, MY FRIEND. I SIMPLY **BORROWED** IT.

WITH YOUR NUMEROUS **PASSAGES** THROUGH MY REALM OF LATE,* I WAS REMINDED OF MY INTENTION TO **INVESTIGATE** THE TIME-TRAVEL PROPERTIES INVESTED IN YOUR **HAMMER**. I HAVE TAKEN **THIS** OPPORTUNITY TO DO SO.

NOW, IN **RETURN** FOR SATISFYING **MY** CURIOSITY, I WILL SATISFY **YOURS**... ABOUT **ME**!

*AS TOLD IN **AVENGERS #175**. --JIM & ROY.

"IN THE TWILIGHT OF MY **EARTHLY** YEARS, I DECIDED TO **THWART** DEATH'S IMPENDING **EMBRACE** BY SEQUESTERING MYSELF IN AGELESS **LIMBO**. HERE FOR **ETERNITY**, I WOULD FURTHER MY **STUDIES** OF TIME.

"I BUILT A WONDROUS **CASTLE** IN WHICH TO DWELL--BUILT WITH **STONE** AND **LABORERS** SALVAGED FROM THE BROKEN **DREAMS** OF A FORMER LIFE.

"DONNING MY FINAL **REGALIA**, I TOOK **TWO** SUBJECTS... **TEMPUS**, WHO I FASHIONED FROM THE VERY **ETHER** OF LIMBO TO GUARD MY DOMAIN, AND THE **SPACE PHANTOM**, WHO DESTINY DELIVERED TO ME.

"BOTH ARE CONSTANT **DISAPPOINTMENTS**. THE PHANTOM IS A **NUISANCE**, WHILE TEMPUS SEEKS TO **END** HIS SERVITUDE THROUGH **SUICIDE** WHENEVER I AM NOT **WATCHING**.*

*AS IN G-S F.F. #2. --J.S./R.T.

"I WAS READY TO **BEGIN** MY STUDIES. OF PARTICULAR INTEREST TO ME WAS THE **ERA** IN WHICH I **ORIGINATED**. ENLISTING THE AID OF THE SO-CALLED **MASTERS OF EVIL**, I SET OUT TO LEARN WHAT **EFFECT** MY COUNTERPART **KANG** HAD ON THE AVENGERS' **DEVELOPMENT**.*

"YOU ARE **UNKNOWING** OF THIS MEETING SINCE IT BECAME A DIVERGENT PATH.

*WAY BACK IN **AVENGERS #10**. --J.S./R.T.

"SOME TIME THEREAFTER, I HAD MY FIRST **VISITATION** BY A **TRINITY** OF BEINGS SPAWNED AT THIS TIME-CYCLE'S **END.**

"THEY CLAIMED TO HAVE **CULLED** ME FROM THE RANKS OF TIME TRAVELERS TO BE **TUTORED** IN THE SECRETS OF TIME... SO THAT I MIGHT **HELP** THEM IN THEIR **CUSTODIANSHIP** OF THE **TIME-STREAM.**

"I **LAUGH** WHEN I COMPARE THE MEAGER KNOWLEDGE I AMASSED IN **FIVE LIFE-TIMES** WITH THE **KNOWLEDGE** OF ETERNITY **THEY** IMPARTED.

"AS THEIR **APPRENTICE**, I WAS ASSIGNED TO OVERSEE THE **SEVEN MILLENNIA** IN WHICH I HAD LIVED. MY **TASK** WAS TO **MONITOR** ALL TIME TRAVEL THEREIN AND TO **UNTANGLE** THE MULTIPLICITIES I CREATED IN FORMER LIVES.

"THE **CELESTIAL MADONNA** AFFAIR* WAS BUT ONE OF **MANY** CAMPAIGNS I UNDERTOOK TO **CURTAIL** MY RENEGADE COUNTERPARTS THROUGHOUT THE MULTIVERSE.

***AVENGERS** #129-135.--J/R.

WITH KANG'S **DISCORPORATION,** I SOUGHT TO REASSURE YOU THAT THE IMMEDIATE THREAT WAS **OVER.** HENCE I GAVE YOU A FACILE EXPLANATION OF MY OWN **UNDOING.***

IF THE **TRUTH** BE KNOWN, THE DEATH OF **ONE** COUNTERPART DOES **NOT** AFFECT THE LIVES OF THE **REST** OF MY LEGION OF TEMPORAL COUNTERPARTS ONE **IOTA.** THE **TREE** OF MY EXISTENCE IS **EVER-GROWING,** AND ONCE HAVING **BEEN,** ALWAYS **IS.**

***AVENGERS** #143.--J/R.

THY TALE **MYSTIFIES** AS MUCH AS IT **ENLIGHTENS.** BY YOUR LEAVE, I WOULD **CONTINUE** MY JOURNEY TO EARTH'S **PAST.** IT IS THE **CELESTIALS'** ORIGINS THAT CONCERN ME NOW, NOT **THINE.**

GO THEN. BUT DO NOT EXPECT TO **FIND** ANYTHING THAT WILL **ALTER** WHAT IS **TO BE.**

AVENGER, HAVE YOU **FORGOTTEN** YOUR **PROMISE** TO DELIVER MY PLANET FROM **LIMBO?**

BY HELPING YOU FIND YOUR **HAMMER,** I HAVE FULFILLED **MY** PART OF THE BARGAIN.

A GOD'S **WORD** IS HIS **BOND.** I WILL **HELP** THEE BEFORE I LEAVE. LET US **HIE** TO THY **WORLD.**

NO *NEED*, ASGARDIAN. NOT WHEN I CAN OPEN A *PORTAL* THROUGH SPACE AND BRING PHANTUS TO *YOU*.

TRULY THY *MAGICKS* ARE ENDLESS.

LET ME *WARN* YOU, THOR. TO ACCOMPLISH THE DEED YOU ENDEAVOR WILL *DEPLETE* EVERY *VESTIGE* OF YOUR HAMMER'S *TIME-ENERGIES!*

DOST THOU MEAN I WILL *NEITHER* BE ABLE TO *SEEK* THE CELESTIALS NOR *RETURN* TO MINE OWN TIME?

I WILL SEE TO YOUR *RETURN*. MORE THAN THAT I SHALL *NOT* DO.

THEN SO *BE* IT! FOR THE HONOR OF AN *OATH*-- FOR THE COMFORT OF AN *ENEMY*-- FREELY DOTH THOR *SACRIFICE* A PORTION OF MJOLNIR'S MYSTIC *MIGHT!*

*WITH A PEAL OF ETHEREAL **THUNDER**, THOR'S HAMMER **ERUPTS**, AND A BURST OF CORUSCATING **ENERGY** STABS THROUGH THE HOLE-IN-SPACE, BOMBARDING THE **HEMISPHERE** BEYOND.*

PHANTUS **SHIMMERS** A MOMENT, THEN **PULSES** FROM THEIR SIGHT, AS THE PLANET'S **CELESTIAL AXIS** IS THRUST **OUT** OF LIMBO BACK INTO THE SPACE/TIME **CONTINUUM.**

IT IS **DONE.** THY WORLD IS **WHOLE,** THANKS TO MIRACULOUS **MJOLNIR.**

IT IS NOT WITHIN THE **ETHICS** OF MY CULTURE TO GIVE **THANKS.**

I CAN SEE WHY IMMORTUS FINDS THEE A **VEXATION.**

AND NOW, THOR, I WILL KEEP **MY** WORD BY SENDING YOU **HOME** TO THE 20th CENTURY A MERE **INSTANT** AFTER YOU LEFT IT.

SOON, BACK OVER EARTH...

I AM **GNAWED** BY THE NOTION THAT THIS WAS ALL A **CONTRIVANCE** TO CLEAVE MINE HAMMER OF ITS **TIME-SPANNING** MIGHT!

WHEN **NEXT** WE MEET, ASGARDIAN, IT SHALL BE BY **MY** WILL.

AND, FOR ALL MINE **EFFORTS**, THE WHYS AND WHEREFORES OF **ARISHEM** AND KIN BE **STILL** UNKNOWN TO ME.

BUT WHATE'ER THE **CHALLENGE** THE CELESTIALS POSE, THOR SHALL **MEET** IT IN A MANNER BEFITTING A **GOD!**

NEXT: AT LAST--*THE* **CELESTIALS!**

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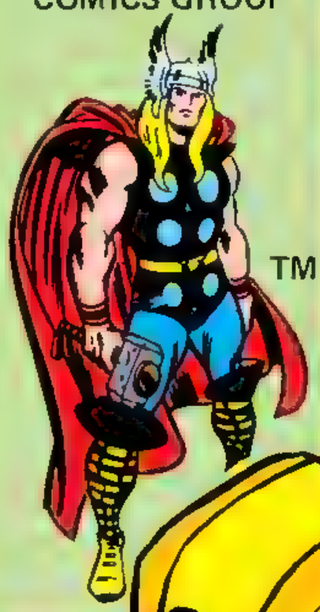

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THOR
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THE MIGHTY

THOR™

SUDDENLY..THE CELESTIALS!

When DR. DONALD BLAKE strikes his wooden walking-stick upon the ground, it becomes the mystic hammer MJOLNIR—and the lame physician is transformed into the Norse God of Thunder, Master of the Storm, Lord of the Living Lightning—and heir to the throne of eternal Asgard....

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY THOR!®

SUDDENLY--THE CELESTIALS!

MEXICO CITY: MORE THAN A MILE HIGH, AND IN ITS WAY MORE THAN A THOUSAND YEARS OLD.

ONCE THE AZTEC CAPITAL CALLED **TENOCHTITLAN**, STANDING ON AN ISLE IN THE MIDST OF LAKE TEXCOCO, IT IS TODAY A SPRAWLING METROPOLIS OF MORE THAN **5,000,000 SOULS.**

SOME OF THESE ARE LESS **CONSIDERATE** THAN OTHERS--AND LESS **LUCKY**, AS THEY'LL DISCOVER WHEN THEY GLANCE OVER THEIR SHOULDERS--!

¡PRONTO, RAMON!

¡SI, LUIS! ¡YO VOY!

BLAM!

¡ESPERE ME! ¡YO TENGO EL DINERO!

ROY THOMAS * WRITER/EDITOR

JOHN BUSCEMA & CHIC STONE ILLUSTRATORS

GEO. ROUSSOS, COLORIST
JOE ROSEN, LETTERER

JIM SHOOTER, CONSULTING EDITOR

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FOR SOME THINGS, NO TRANSLATION IS NECESSARY:

¡MIRA ALLI!

¡YO LO MIRO! ¡ES EL HEROE AMERICANO THOR!

¡TIRA! ¡TIRA!

THY TONGUE BE NOT ONE SPOKEN IN DISTANT ASGARD, VILLAIN.

¡BTAM!

¿QUE--?

STILL, IT DOTH TAKE NO SCHOLAR TO DIVINE THINE INTENT TOWARD ME...

AND, IN SOOTH, I LIKE IT NOT!

¡UNNNGH!

¡LUIS! ¡MATA EL!

¡NO TE PRECUPE! ¡YO ME ENCARGO! ¡DE ÉL--!

¡VOTO A DIOS!

¡EL MARTILLO-- ES GIRANDO!

RATTA RATTA RATTA

¡MIS BALAS NO LOGRAN PASAR!

SURRENDER, VARLET-- ERE THOU DOST ANGER THE SON OF ODIN!

¡PTING!

¡KPING!

¡ZING!

¡CUIDADO, TODOS! ¡LAS BALAS REBOTAN!

¡PKING!

DESPITE THE POLICEMAN'S WARNING, HOWEVER, THE **CROWD**-- LIKE CROWDS IN EVERY AGE AND CLIME-- SEEMS ALMOST MORE **FASCINATED** THAN REPELLED BY THE ONGOING VIOLENCE-- TILL, **SUDDENLY**--

¡AAAAGH!

¡EL ESTA HERIDO!

¡BLAM!

NOW THY RECKLESS GUNFIRE HATH ENDANGERED YONDER *INNOCENTS.*

¡TO HWA M!

I SAY THEE-- ENOW!

ONE OF THE MODERN-DAY DESPERADOES, HOWEVER, HAS REACHED THE GANG'S **CONVERTIBLE**, AND--

¡AQUI ES DONDE **CAZO** EL, DIO DE TRUENO--

NATIONAL

--DELANTE RECUPERA SU *MARTILLO!*

FLYING **MJOLNIR** AND HURTLING **AUTO** REACH THE GOLDEN-HAIRED SCION OF ASGARD AT PRECISELY THE **SAME INSTANT...!**

¡THRAKK!

YET, EVEN AS THE FRANTIC BANK-ROBBER STEPS ON THE **GAS**--

¡AHORA **ESCAPE**-- ADELANTE DE LA **POLICIA**--!

--HE ABRUPTLY DISCOVERS THAT HIS CAR IS MOVING **NOT** FORWARD--

¿QU--?

--BUT **UPWARD**--

¿QUE PASA?

--AND OVER!

AAAA

¡AYUDE! ¡PERMITE ME SALIR!

METHINKS E'EN **MY** LIMITED COMMAND OF SPANISH BE ENOW TO KNOW WHAT THOU DOST **SAY**, MORTAL.

THOU DOST WANT **OUT**, DOST THOU NOT?

SO BE IT!

¡SLAMM!

THE DANGER ENDED NOW, THE HUMAN THRONGS PRESS FORWARD, ONLY TO ENCOUNTER--

STAND YE BACK, MEN OF MIDGARD!*

TIME ENOW HAVE I WASTED IN BATTLE WITH EVIL MEN OF LITTLE DREAMS.

SWOOSH

*MIDGARD= EARTH. --ROY.

NOW, I BE ELSE-WHERE BOUND!

'TIS BEYOND BELIEF! I-- OFFSPRING OF ODIN, AND PRINCE OF ASGARD-- FORCED TO EXPEND PRECIOUS MOMENTS IN DEFENSE OF MERE WEALTH--

--WHILE ENGAGED IN A MISSION 'PON WHICH DOTH REST THE FATE OF EARTH ITSELF!

IN SOOTH, 'TWAS MY DECISION TO INTERVENE-- MORE TO SAVE LIVES THAN PESOS.

STILL, THAT UNEVEN COMBAT MERELY REMINDED ME HOW FAR I HAVE COME, OF LATE--

--FROM THOSE DAYS WHEN I WAS GREATLY CONCERNED WITH MATTERS MORE BEFITTING A SO-CALLED "SUPERHERO."

NOW, 'TIS MORE COSMIC CONCERNS WHICH DO VEX ME.

THUS, THOUGH I BE SELF-EXILED FROM GLEAMING ASGARD--

--STILL, I AM SORE TROUBLED-- AND, THOUGH I LIKE IT NOT--

--I WOULD AND MUST SPEAK WITH FATHER ODIN!

THUMP THUMP

TWICE THOR STAMPS HIS MYSTIC URU HAMMER UPON THE QUIVERING MOUNTAIN-PEAK...

AND, WITHIN SECONDS, DARK STORM-CLOUDS BEGIN TO FORM WITH AMAZING SWIFTNESS ABOVE A WIDE AREA WHICH INCLUDES NEARBY MEXICO CITY.

SKIES WHICH A MINUTE AGO WERE CLEAR NOW RUMBLE WITH OMINOUS, BROODING THUNDER...

...AND A CERTAIN **JAGGED PEAK** NOW WITNESSES WHAT SEEMS THE **FURY OF THE UNLEASHED ELEMENTS...!**

ALL-FATHER! 'TIS **I** WHO DO CALL UPON THEE-- **THOR, GOD OF THUNDER, AND LORD OF THE LIVING LIGHTNING!**

COME TO ME, I BESEECH THEE-- IF THOU HAST YET REMAINING **ANY LOVE** FOR THINE ONLY **BLOOD-SON!**

NEXT INSTANT, THE VERY **HEAVENS** SEEM TO SPLIT ASUNDER, AND --

WHY HAST THOU CALLED OUT TO ME, MY ONCE-HEIR--

--WHEN THOU HAST **FLED** THE REALM ETERNAL, AND I IN TURN HAVE FORE'ER **DENIED** IT THEE?

THY WORDS BE WRAPPED 'ROUND ABOUT WITH **ANGER,** SIRE.

YET, **NO ILL WILL** DO I BEAR THEE! I BUT WISH **ANSWERS** TO--

ANSWERS!? BY WHAT RIGHT DOST THOU DEMAND ANSWERS OF **ODIN THE ONE-EYED?**

HAST THOU DECIDED AT LAST TO **OBEY** ME-- AND TO RENOUNCE THINE UN-DESERVED ALLEGIANCE TO THE MUDBALL CALLED **EARTH?**

WILT THOU **RETURN** FOR ALL TIME TO **ASGARD**-- TO ADD THINE HAMMER AND THY GOOD RIGHT ARM TO HER POWER--

--RATHER THAN **DIVIDE** THINE EFFORTS FRUITLESSLY 'TWIXT US AND MIDGARD?

WELL? **SPEAK,** MY SON!

I CAN **ANSWER,** SIRE, ONLY BY **REPEATING** MY SEVERAL QUESTIONS...!

SEVERAL, NOW!? VERILY, MOMENT BY MOMENT, THINE IMPUDENCE DOTH **GROW!**

FIRST, I WOULD KNOW THE **WHY AND WHEREFORE** OF MINE INTEREST IN THE AFFAIRS OF **EARTH...**

I KNOW THAT I BE TRULY **ASGARDIAN BORN--**

--THOUGH THOU HAST NE'ER SEEN FIT TO TELL ME THE IDENTITY OF **MINE OWN MOTHER!**

I KNOW, LIKEWISE, THAT I BE **NOT** OF EARTH AT ALL--

--AND THAT MINE EARTHLY ALTER EGO *DR. DON BLAKE* BE BUT A *HOLLOW SHELL*--

--A PERSONA FORMED BY *THEE*, YEARS AGO, TO TEACH ME *HUMILITY* OF A SORT. *

*AS SEEN IN THE CLASSIC ISSUE #159. --R.T.

NAUGHT HAST THOU RELATED TO ME, THUNDERER, THAT I DID NOT ALREADY *KNOW*.

NOR DO I CHOOSE, AT THIS TIME, TO *ADD* TO THY MOST FINITE KNOWLEDGE.

PASS ON, THEN, TO THY *SECOND* QUESTION.

AYE-- FOR, IT BE OF *GREATER MOMENT* TO ME, BY FAR--!

NOT LONG SINCE, THOU DIDST ALLOW MY GOOD FRIEND *BALDER, GOD OF LIGHT*, TO BE FELLED BY AN ARROW FIRED BY *HODER THE BLIND*--

--BUT *GUIDED* BY THE EVIL HAND OF MINE ADOPTED BROTHER *LOKI*.*

*THIS AND THE FOLLOWING SCENES ARE FROM THE MUCH-HERALDED ISSUES #274-278. --ROY.

THOR CONTINUES: "THIS TRAGEDY *LED*-- AS PREDICTED IN THE PROPHECIES OF *VOLLA*, BOTH WHEN SHE LIVED AND WHEN SHE HAD PASSED ON INTO HELA'S REALM--

"--TO THE LONG-DELAYED AND EVER-DREADED *DAY OF RAGNAROK*-- *THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS*-- *THE END OF ALL THAT IS!*

"FOR, IT DID SEEM THAT *GIANT* AND *TROLL* AND *MID-GARD SERPENT* DID CROSS THE RAINBOW BRIDGE INTO BESIEGED *ASGARD* ITSELF!

"AND, *DURING* THIS WHILE--

"--A *LUSTFUL MORTAL* DID ACQUIRE, WITH THY SECRET HELP, THE *NAME*, THE *STRENGTH*-- AYE, E'EN THE MYSTIC *HAMMER* OF THOR!

"THIS HE DID, SO FAR AS HE KNEW, OUT OF DESIRE FOR MILADY *SIF*...

"...THOUGH, IN TRUTH, HE WAS BUT A *PUPPET*-- AND THOU, SIRE, DID PULL THE STRINGS!

"THEN *HEIMDALL* AND MANY ANOTHER GOD SEEMED TO *PERISH* IN PITCHED BATTLE WITH THE *POWERS OF DARKNESS*, LED BY *HELA* HERSELF.

"HOW COULD *ANY* OF US SUSPECT THAT 'TWAS ALL DECREED BY *THEE*, ALL-FATHER--

"--THAT THE EVIL ONES *NE'ER* ENTERED ASGARD AT ALL, BUT FOUGHT US INSTEAD ON SOME SOUNDING PLAIN *OUTSIDE*--

"--SO THAT THERE WOULD BE, THOU DIDST KNOW, ONLY *THREE* TRUE DEATHS DURING THIS *'FALSE RAGNAROK'*--

"--TWO OF WHICH WERE *MORTALS*, INCLUDING HE WHO HAD BECOME THE *SECOND THOR!*

"NOW I DO KNOW THAT THOU DIDST HELP HIM WREST MY POWERS AND IDENTITY SO THAT *HE*, NOT I, WOULD DIE IN FULFILLMENT OF *PROPHECY*...

"...AND I AM *ASHAMED* FOR IT.

"YET, THOUGH ALL THE OTHER *ASGARDIANS* ROSE, UNHARMED, WHEN THE DAY OF STRIFE WAS DONE-- STILL *ONE DID NOT:*

"*BALDER*-- HE, THE MOST NOBLE OF ALL-- HIS BRAVE LIFE SUSTAINED E'EN NOW ONLY BY THE SACRED *ODINFLAME!*

"FOR, ON THAT DAY HE DOTH *TRULY* PERISH-- IT SHALL BE THE *TRUE RAGNAROK* WHICH SHALL INESCAPABLY BEFALL ASGARD!

WHY, FATHER? WHY COULDST THOU NOT HAVE SAVED *BALDER*, ALSO-- AS THOU DIDST SAVE *SO MANY OTHERS* THAT DIRE DAY?

I WOULD KNOW WHY!!

TAKE NOT SUCH IMPERIOUS TONES WITH *ME*, GODLING!

SURELY, E'EN IN THY RAGE, THOU MUST SEE THAT-- HAD BALDER *NOT* PASSED O'ER INTO THAT *HALF-LIFE* WHICH NOW BE HIS--

--*ALL* WOULD HAVE BEEN AS BE-*BEFORE*, WHEN THE FALSE RAGNAROK WAS ENDED-- AND MY WORK TO *FULFILL* THE PROPHECIES AND YET *SAVE* ASGARD, WOULD HAVE BEEN *FOR NAUGHT!*

BALDER'S SACRIFICE HATH PRESERVED *ASGARD*, AND ALL WHO *DWELL* THERE...

--AYE, AND MAYHAP HATH SAVED THY PRECIOUS *MIDGARD*, CALLED *EARTH*, AS WELL!

"*MAYHAP*" SAVED IT!?

MAYHAP.

THOU DOST KNOW *MORE* THAN THOU WILT *SAY*, ALL-FATHER!

AND, I WOULD KNOW ONE THING *MORE*, NOW THAT I THINK ON IT--

WHAT DOST THOU KNOW OF ENTITIES CALLED *CELESTIALS*-- MIGHTY *SPACE-GODS*, TALLER THAN MOUNTAINS, WHO E'EN NOW HAVE BEGUN A *FIFTY-YEAR JUDGMENT* WHICH, 'TIS SAID, WILL DECIDE THE *DESTINY OF EARTH??*

BUT, ODIN MAKES NO MOVE TO ANSWER... SO THOR GOES ON:

"'TWAS, I KNOW NOW, A *MILLENNIUM* AGO THAT I DID ENCOUNTER, FAR SOUTH OF HERE, BEINGS CALLED *ETERNALS*... LED BY VALIANT *VIRAKO* AND STOLID *VALKIN.*

"I LEARNED LITTLE FROM THEM, BUT THAT THEY WERE *CREATIONS* OF THESE CELESTIALS.

"THEY DID CLAIM THAT *THEY*, AND *MORTAL MEN*, AND YET A *THIRD* RACE, WERE ALL EVOLVED FROM SPECIES CREATED BY THE CELESTIALS-- WHO WOULD COME TO *JUDGE EARTH*, IF 'TWOULD LIVE OR DIE, AT A LATER DAY.

"I MIGHT HAVE LEARNED *MORE* IN TIME, BUT WAS FORCED INSTEAD TO *DO BATTLE* WITH ONE WHOM THE ANCIENT *INCAS* DID WORSHIP AS THEIR OWN *THUNDER DEITY.* *

*AS SEEN IN *THOR ANNUAL #7.* --ROY.

"VIRAKO HIMSELF DID PERISH IN DESTROYING THE MONSTROUS RAINBOW WORM WHICH LIKEWISE SPRUNG UP--

"--OR RATHER, HIS ATOMS WERE SCATTERED, FOR ETERNALS CANNOT PERISH-- THEY SAY.

"I, IN TURN, DID DEFEAT DROMEDAN, THE BEING WHO DID CONTROL THE OTHERS.

"HE WAS A MUTATE, 'TWAS SAID--

"--EVIL CREATION OF THAT THIRD RACE, CALLED THE DEVIANTS, OF WHICH THE ETERNALS HAD SPOKEN BEFORE.

"GOOD VALKIN THEN DECLARED HIMSELF FATHER, AS WELL AS UNCLE, TO VIRAKO'S ABSENT SON IKARIS--

"--TO THE DISPLEASURE, I AM SURE, OF HIS OWN OFFSPRING DRUIG.

"THEN WOULD I HAVE PRESSED TO LEARN MORE OF THESE CELESTIALS--

"--AND WHERE THE ETERNALS WOULD STAND, IF THE TOWERING SPACE-GODS DECIDED ONE DAY TO ANNIHILATE THE PLANET WHICH NURTURED US ALL.

"JUST THEN, A GREAT SHADOW FELL OVER US:

"THE MAMMOTH STARCRAFT OF THE CELESTIALS, I AM CERTAIN!

"ANXIOUS THAT I NOT OPPOSE THE CELESTIALS, VALKIN AND HIS FELLOW ETERNAL AJAK DID HYPNOTIZE ME-- FILLED MY MIND WITH FALSE MEMORIES--

"--AND I SOARED OFF, BACK TOWARD ASGARD, E'EN AS THE CELESTIALS DID LAND FOR A SUPPOSED THIRD TIME UPON EARTH!

"NOR DID I RECALL AUGHT OF MY SOJOURN AMONGST THE ETERNALS IN THE LAND NOW CALLED PERU, FOR A THOUSAND YEARS--

"--TILL GRIM, FIERY *MIMIR* CLEARED MY MIND, MERELY THAT THE RESTORED KNOWLEDGE MIGHT *TORTURE* ME!

"MIMIR KNEW THAT, WHEN THE FALSE RAGNAROK WAS ENDED, I WOULD BE FORCED TO *ACT* UPON THAT KNOWLEDGE...

"...AND I SUSPECT HE THINKS MINE ACTIONS WILL LEAD TO MY *DESTRUCTION!*

"*AGAIN*, ALL-FATHER-- *WHY? WHY??*

"I *ACCEPT* NOW THAT BALDER *'DIED'* SO THAT THE REALM MIGHT *SURVIVE*--

BUT *WHY* DOTH THE EARTH MEAN SO MUCH TO *ME*-- A SON OF *ASGARD*?

AND *WHO* ARE THE *CELESTIALS*-- THE *ETERNALS*-- AND WHAT KNOWEST *THOU* OF THEM??

*IF THOR COULD SEE PAST HIS OWN **RAGE**, HE WOULD NOTE PERHAPS THAT THERE IS **TORMENT WITHOUT EQUAL** IN THE FACE OF HIS SIRE.*

LORD ODIN OPENS HIS MOUTH, AS IF TO SPEAK.

THEN, AS IF HE THINKS BETTER OF IT...

*...HE ABRUPTLY **VANISHES** INSTEAD!*

*AND THE THUNDER GOD'S **WRATH** IS CHANGED, IN A FLEETING INSTANT--*

--TO SORROW.

THUS *LITTLE*, IT SEEMS, DOTH MINE OWN *FATHER* THINK OF ME...!

*THEN-- **FATHER NO MORE!***

THE *AUDIENCE* IS ENDED-- SO LET THE *STORM* ABATE, AS WELL!

THUMP THUMP THUMP

AND, IN NOT-FAR-DISTANT MEXICO CITY...

¡EL TEMESTAD HAVE *PASADO!*

NO APARCA-MINTO

¡MIO DIO! ¿QUE HARE DE AL LADO EN LOCO MONDO?

AS FOR THE INSTIGATOR OF THESE UNIQUE METEOROLOGICAL EVENTS: HE IS ALREADY STRIKING **SOUTHWARD**, PROPELLED BY HIS MYSTIC **HAMMER**...

...OVER THE INWARD CURVE OF THE **PACIFIC OCEAN**, AND TOWARD THE SKY-THRUSTING PEAKS OF THE GREAT **ANDES MOUNTAINS** IN SOUTH AMERICA.

ONLY **THERE** WILL THIS AGE-OLD **MYSTERY** BE SOLVED-- IF AT ALL!

SOON AFTERWARD, ABOARD A CERTAIN U.S. JETLINER...

HOLY--! YOU SEE WHAT **I** SAW, PHIL?

I-- **THINK** I DID, DAVE, BUT--

I SAW IT **TOO**, CAPTAIN! IT WAS-- A **MAN**--

--BUT HE WAS **FLYING**-- FLYING FASTER THAN THE **SPEED OF SOUND!**

'TIS MOST **UNUSUAL** FOR A PLANE TO BE HERE, METHINKS.

YET, THEY SEEM IN **FULL CONTROL** OF THEIR CRAFT-- AND I'VE NO TIME TO **WASTE**, SO--!

WHILE, INSIDE--

WHAT WAS **THAT**-- SOME KIND OF **UFO**?!

I--I CERTAINLY **HOPE** NOT! I'M HERE FOR A VACATION, NOT A **CLOSE ENCOUNTER!**

AT LEAST, NOT OF **THAT** KIND!

IT WAS **THOR**, I TELL YA!

I SEEN HIM **ONCE BEFORE**, BACK IN **NEW YORK!**

THERE IS NO WAY OF PROVING **ANY** OF THE EDUCATED OR UNEDUCATED GUESSES OF PASSENGERS OR CREW, HOWEVER...

FOR, ALREADY THE GOLD-TRESSED THUNDER GOD IS **MILES AHEAD** OF THE SPEEDING PLANE, WHERE HE BEHOLDS--

THE HOME-BASE OF THE **CELESTIALS**-- IT **MUST** BE!!

BUT, 'TIS COVERED O'ER BY SOME **THICK, OPAQUE SHELL**, WHICH DOTH DEFY MY SIGHT!

WELL, THEN--

--'TIS CLEAR I'LL LEARN WHAT I NEEDS MUST LEARN--

--ONLY BY *BURSTING THROUGH* THAT SHELL-- TO THE *NETHER SIDE!*

SHOOSH!

AND *THERE*, AS THE BARD ONCE SAID...

...IS THE RUB!

SPRONG!

BY OD--! NAY, I'LL NOT SWEAR BY HIM WHO HATH *DIS-OWNED* ME!

STILL,'TIS TRUE THAT YONDER DOME HATH *REPELLED* ME-- AND *MJOLNIR,* AS WELL.

BUT, DOUBTLESS 'TWILL *NOT* DO SO WHEN MINE URU HAMMER BE BACKED NOT BY SHEER *MOMENTUM* ALONE--

--BUT BY THE *FULL, UN-FETTERED STRENGTH OF THOR!*

YET, AGAIN, TO THE ASGARDIAN'S AMAZEMENT--

IT DOTH *DEFY* MY MIGHTIEST BLOW-- AS IF 'TWERE THE STING OF A *GNAT!*

SURELY, *WHOE'ER* THESE CELESTIALS BE, THEY BE *POWER INCARNATE,* TO CHALLENGE THE *HAMMER OF THOR!*

THRAM!

TRUE WORDS INDEED, ASGARDIAN...

...AS THE CREW OF COLUMBIAN AIRLINES FLIGHT 53 COULD ATTEST, RIGHT ABOUT NOW:

CAPTAIN! WE'RE *LOSING ALTITUDE*-- DOWN TO ONLY A COUPLE OF MILES! WE--

NEVER MIND *THAT!* LOOK UP *AHEAD!*

IT *CAN'T* BE! FIRST, A *FLYING MAN--*

--AND NOW THIS!?

GAMMENON, OF THE FOURTH HOST, STANDS LIKE ONE MORE MOUNTAIN AMONG MOUNTAINS--

--RISING SOME 2000 FEET INTO THE SKY, TO LOOK WITH COLD, INSCRUTABLE MAJESTY AT THIS METAL INSECT WHICH HAS WANDERED, UNINVITED, INTO THE TERRITORY CONTROLLED BY THE CELESTIALS.

EACH OF THE CELESTIALS HAS HIS OWN SPECIAL TASK-- AND GAMMENON IS A GATHERER, ONE WHO HARVESTS CROPS OF LIVING THINGS FOR STUDY AND ANALYSIS BY OTHERS OF HIS STAR-SPAWNED KIND.

THOUGH HIS FELLOW CELESTIALS HAVE SEEN MANY AIRCRAFT UP CLOSE, IN VARIOUS PARTS OF THE WORLD, THIS IS THE FIRST SUCH THAT GAMMENON HAS SEEN IN HIS THREE YEARS UPON THIS PALTRY PLANET'S SURFACE...

AND SO... HE GATHERS IT.

THE RESULTS INSIDE ARE IMMEDIATE... AND DRAMATIC.

EEEEEE! WH-WHAT'S HAPPENING?

A CRASH! WE'RE GOING TO CRASH!!

THE TRUTH, HOWEVER, IS EVEN MORE STARTLING...

...AS THE GOLDEN LEVIATHAN OUTSIDE HOLDS AND EXAMINES THE HAPLESS JETLINER AS AN INNOCENT CHILD MIGHT A NEW TOY.

OR IS HE MORE LIKE A MERCILESS CHILD, WHO TEARS THE WINGS OFF HELPLESS FLIES?

BY HEIMDALL'S HORN!

THAT CELESTIAL, SUCH AS MIMIR DID SHOW TO ME-- HE PASSED RIGHT THROUGH THE IMPENETRABLE DOME--TO GRASP YONDER PLANE!

BUT-- THAT GAPING HOLE HE HATH MADE IN ITS SIDE-- THE PRESSURE CHANGE WILL--!

NAY! THOR SHALL ACT-- E'EN IF IT MEAN MY PRESENCE HERE BE KNOWN TO THOSE I SEEK!

IF THY RE-INFORCED DOME WITH-STANDS SOME-HOW MINE HAMMER, MON-STER--MAYHAP THOU WILT NOT!

FUH-WHAM

CITIES HAVE TOPPLED, AND COSMIC-POWERED SUPER-VILLAINS GONE DOWN LIKE NEW-MOWN GRASS, BEFORE THE THUNDEROUS, HEAVEN-FORGED POWER OF MJOLNIR--

BUT, GAMMENON IS NOT SUCH AS THEY...

AND THE SOLE RESULT OF THOR'S PUISSANT BLOW IS A **HEAD** TURNED UPON SOME INNER, SILENT, CYCLOPEAN **SWIVEL**--

BY THE GLEAMING APPLES OF IDUNN!

--AND A **HAND**, LARGE ENOUGH TO CRUSH AN AIRCRAFT CARRIER, SWEEPING ACROSS THE SKY LIKE THE **SHADOW OF DOOM!**

LARGE THOU MAYEST BE, CELESTIAL--AND **STRONG**--AYE, AND E'EN **FAST**--

YET, THOU SHALT **NOT** LAY HANDS UPON THE **GOD OF THUNDER!**

TNNSSS!

IT IS NOT, HOWEVER, THE GATHERER'S INTENTION TO **TOUCH** THIS CURIOUS SPECIMEN--THE **FIRST** SUPER-POWERED BEING HE HAS ENCOUNTERED WHO IS NEITHER **ETERNAL** NOR **DEVIANT.**

NO, NOT TO TOUCH--

--BUT TO **MAKE HELPLESS**--

--OR, FAILING THAT, TO **DESTROY.**

BUT **ONLY** IF ALL ELSE FAILS.

THOOOM!

BLINDING **LIGHTNING** MINGLES MADLY WITH THE **POWER OF THE COSMIC** UNBOUND ON EARTH--TO FILL THE SKY WITH A GLARE LIKE THAT OF A MULTITUDE OF **H-BOMBS**...

THEN, WHEN THE BLAZING LIGHT HAS **FADED**, AND EARTH AND HEAVENS HAVE CEASED THEIR TREMBLING--

--ONLY A WRITHING SPIRAL OF **EX-PENDED, DYING ENERGY** EXISTS WHERE LATELY **THOR** DID STAND.

GOOD LORD! I-- I THINK THAT WAS **THOR** OUT THERE-- YOU KNOW, THE **SUPERHERO** FROM THE STATES--

--AND THAT THING **ZAPPED** HIM TO NOTHING, LIKE HE WAS **MARY WORTH!**

OR **US**, DAVE...

OR **US!**

AS FOR **GAMMENON**: HE LOOKS ON WITH WHAT MAY BE A **MILD REGRET** AT THIS WASTE OF WHAT WAS DOUBTLESS A MOST INTERESTING SPECIMEN OF LIFE.

STILL, THERE WILL PERHAPS BE **OTHERS**, IN TIME.

RATHER THAN DESTROY, HE PREFERS TO PRESERVE-- TO **PROTECT**--

--AS HIS **AURA** HAS DONE TO THOSE WITHIN THE **PLANE** HE HOLDS--

--PREVENTING THEIR **DEATHS** DUE TO SUDDEN LOSS OF OXYGEN AND EXTREME PRESSURE CHANGE.

NOW, HE **PASSES THROUGH** THE HEMISPHERE AGAIN, AS IF IT WERE NOT THERE...

AND ANYONE **WATCHING** COULD SEE THAT, GARGANTUAN AS HE IS, HE IS STILL **DWARFED** BY THAT WHITELY GLEAMING DOME.

AYE... **IF** ANYONE WERE WATCHING.

BUT, NO ONE **IS**...

...UNLESS PERHAPS IT BE ALL-FATHER **ODIN**, A WORLD AND TIME AWAY...!

NEXT ISSUE: **THE CITY OF THE SPACE-GODS!**

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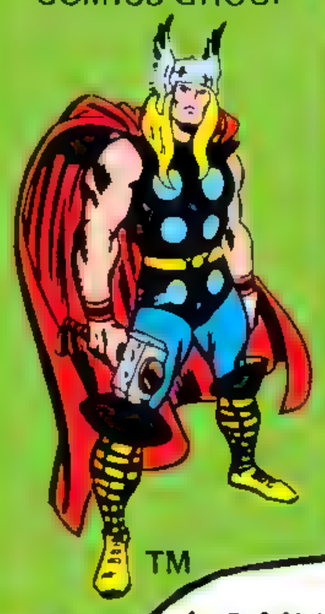

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THE MIGHTY THOR™

AGAINST *MORTAL*, *DEVIANT*, AND *ETERNAL* MUST I STRIVE--AND *PREVAIL*--

--OR THE EARTH IS DOOMED!

COCKRUM / MCLEOD

BATTLE BEYOND BELIEF--IN THE CITY OF THE SPACE GODS!

When DR. DONALD BLAKE strikes his wooden walking-stick upon the ground, it becomes the mystic hammer MJOLNIR— and the lame physician is transformed into the Norse God of Thunder, Master of the Storm, Lord of the Living Lightning— and heir to the throne of eternal Asgard....

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY THOR!®

THE CITY OF THE DARK GANG!

A SCENE TO SHOCK THE AGES:

THOR, GOD OF THUNDER-- HIGH AMID THE TOWERING ANDES MOUNTAINS-- HIS GREAT POWER PROVING INSUFFICIENT TO CARRY HIM THROUGH THE GREAT DOME REARED BY THE SPACEBORN CELESTIALS--

--AND NOW, HIS AWESOME MIGHT SEEMING LIKE A STRAW IN HURRICANE WINDS BEFORE ONE OF THOSE CELESTIALS-- THE GATHERER CALLED GAMMENON! *

TZZSH!

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* AS SEEN SO CLIMACTICALLY LAST ISSUE.--R.T.

L6399

YES, MERE MOMENTS AGO, THE MOUNTAINS SHOOK, THE HEAVENS TREMBLED-- AND WHEN THE BLAZING LIGHT FADED--

--ONLY A WRITHING SPIRAL OF SPENT ENERGY REMAINED, WHERE AN EXILED PRINCE OF ASGARD HAD CHALLENGED A GARGANTUAN GOD-THING FROM SPACE!

NOW, LET US LIVE AGAIN THAT TERRIFYING INSTANT WHEN GAMMENON THE GATHERER STANDS SUPREME, TOWERING NEARLY TWO THOUSAND FEET INTO THE SKY THAT BIRTHED HIS ANCIENT, MORE-THAN-HUMAN RACE...

... AND TURNS HIS ATTENTION ONCE MORE TO THE STRICKEN U.S. JETLINER GRASPED IN HIS MASSIVE FIST.

ONLY HIS VAST POWERS PRESERVE THE OXYGEN AND ATMOSPHERIC PRESSURE WITHIN...

...THOUGH ONE WOULD BE HARD PUT TO FIND GRATITUDE IN THE COCKPIT:

IT'S IMPOSSIBLE! I DON'T KNOW WHAT THE GUY THOR WAS DOING HERE, SO FAR FROM THE STATES--

BUT WE'RE NOT LIKELY TO LEARN NOW-- 'CAUSE THAT MONSTER BLASTED HIM RIGHT OUT OF THE SKY!

ISN'T THERE ANYTHING YOU CAN DO, CAPTAIN?

THE RADIO'S KAPUT, NANCY.

ALL WE CAN DO IS WAIT-- AND MAYBE PRAY.

WHILE, BACK IN THE TOURIST SECTION--

AMAZING! BY ALL RIGHTS, WE SHOULD'VE DIED WHEN THAT THING PLUCKED OFF OUR RIGHT WING-- AND TORE A HOLE IN THE SIDE OF THE PLANE!

YOU ACT LIKE YOU'RE SORRY WE DIDN'T!

NO, I JUST MEANT--

HEY! YOU FEEL THAT? WE'RE MOVIN' AGAIN!

"MOVING" IS PERHAPS AN INADEQUATE WORD FOR WHAT IS HAPPENING TO THE HELPLESS AIRCRAFT...

... AS GREAT GAMMENON STRIDES, LIKE SOME SEVEN-LEAGUE GIANT OUT OF FABLE, ACROSS PINNACLES AND PEAKS.

INSIDE, A SOMEWHAT LESS AGILE PASSENGER STRUGGLES TOWARD A VACANT SEAT...

SAY... WHO'RE YOU?

I DON'T REMEMBER SEEIN' YOU THE WHOLE TRIP FROM NEW YORK!

AFRAID YOU MUST'VE BEEN LOOKING THE WRONG WAY, SON.

NOW, IF YOU'LL PARDON ME -- MY LEG, YOU KNOW...!

YEAH, OKAY -- BUT I SURE DON'T REMEMBER YOU.

I JUST HOPE THE CELESTIALS AREN'T AS SHARP-SIGHTED AS YOU, YOUNGSTER.

ELSE THEY'LL FIGURE OUT THAT THOR MANAGED TO STRIKE HIS HAMMER AGAINST A ROCK, JUST AS THAT GOLDEN GIANT LASHED OUT--

--SO THAT AT THE LAST INSTANT HE BECAME Dr. DONALD BLAKE-- JUST AS HE HURTLED AT TOP SPEED INTO THE PLANE!

LUCKY THE AURA THE CELESTIAL PUT AROUND THE PLANE ISN'T AS STRONG AS THOSE AROUND IT, OR I'D NEVER HAVE--

WH--? I FEEL-- EVERYONE SEEMS TO FEEL -- SO STRANGE--!

SMALL WONDER... AS GAMMENON STEPS EASILY THROUGH A GLEAMING WHITE DOME THAT DEFIED EVEN MIGHTY MJOLNIR...

...AND INTO THE CITY OF THE SPACE GODS, TO WALK GIGANTICALLY AMONG HIS OWN KIND ONCE AGAIN.

THE ANCIENTS FIRST BUILT THESE PYRAMIDS, UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THOSE WHO ARE CALLED ETERNALS...

...FOR REASONS NEITHER RACE UNDERSTOOD, A THOUSAND YEARS AGO.

NOR DO THEY KNOW ANY MORE TODAY, SOME THREE YEARS AFTER THE LANDING OF THE CELESTIALS' FOURTH HOST.

NOW, GAMMENON SETS DOWN THE AIRCRAFT, ALLOWING THE AIR PRESSURE WITHIN SLOWLY TO EQUALIZE.

IT NO LONGER INTERESTS HIM OVERMUCH.

HE IS, AFTER ALL, A GATHERER, NOT AN ANALYZER.

TIME ENOUGH FOR JEMIAH TO CARRY OUT THAT TASK, AT HIS OWN CONVENIENCE.

FOR, THERE IS NOWHERE THE CREATURES WITHIN CAN FLEE TO.

THUS, WITHOUT A BACKWARD GLANCE -- EVEN A DISDAINFUL ONE -- GAMMENON JOINS HIS SKY-REACHING BRETHREN IN THE PERFORMANCE OF TASKS NO MORTAL MIND COULD FULLY FATHOM.

AFTER A FEW MINUTES, THOSE INSIDE MOVE TOWARD THE GAPING HOLE...

GOOD LORD! LOOK OUT THERE!

WE'RE IN THE MIDDLE OF SOME SORT OF AZTEC RUINS!

INCA, YOU MEAN, MISTER! THE AZTECS WERE UP IN MEXICO.

WHATEVER.

MAIN THING IS, IT DOESN'T SEEM THAT GIANT'S GOING TO ADD US TO HIS BUTTERFLY COLLECTION JUST YET-- SO WE MIGHT AS WELL STRETCH OUR LEGS.

NEED SOME HELP, MA'AM?

MY NAME'S LISA, NOT "MA'AM" -- BUT THANKS, MISTER--

JOHNSON. WELL, I GUESS THIS WASN'T EXACTLY THE KIND OF SOUTH AMERICAN VACATION YOUR TRAVEL AGENT MAPPED OUT FOR YOU.

PARDON ME, MY NAME'S DON BLAKE-- I'M A DOCTOR--AND I'M JUST CHECKING TO SEE IF ANYBODY NEEDS MEDICAL ATTENTION.

AFRAID I DON'T HAVE SO MUCH AS A FIRST-AID KIT ON ME, BUT IF YOU --

WE'RE FINE, THANK YOU, DOCTOR.

BUT, YOU MIGHT WANT TO SEE TO THE OTHERS.

I ALREADY DID. NO CASUALTIES, THEN, APPARENTLY.

NO CASUALTIES -- EXCEPT PERHAPS THE WHOLE OF HUMANITY ON THIS PLANET, MY GOOD DOCTOR!

Eh? WHO--?

A MAN-- NO, TWO MEN-- COMING UP THOSE STAIRS!

THEN WE'RE NOT ALONE HERE, AFTER ALL!

THE HUMAN RACE HAS NEVER BEEN ALONE, YOUNG LADY-- NOT EVEN WHEN, IN OUR IGNORANCE, WE THOUGHT WE WERE.

WAIT! I-- LOOK, I DON'T MEAN TO BE FORWARD, BUT YOU LOOK FAMILIAR TO--

YES! THAT'S IT!

YOU'RE A DEAD-RINGER FOR Dr. DANIEL DAMIAN, THE RENOWNED ARCHAEOLOGIST WHO DISAPPEARED IN THESE PARTS -- SOME THREE YEARS AGO!

GUILTY AS CHARGED, Dr. BLAKE.

Oh, AND BY THE BY, THIS DOWER AND RATHER QUIET INDIVIDUAL AT MY SIDE IS NAMED AJAK... THOUGH THE INCAS CALLED HIM TECUMOTZIN.

WHY SHOULD I SPEAK--TO MORTALS?

HE HASN'T HAD MUCH PRACTICE TALKING TO HUMANS BESIDES MYSELF FOR THE PAST THOUSAND YEARS OR SO.

DID YOU SAY -- A *THOUSAND YEARS?!*

Dr. DAMIAN! WHAT'S WRONG??

IT'S... *NOTHING.* NOTHING AT ALL.

TOO MUCH *EXCITE-MENT,* PERHAPS... FOR AN OLD MAN.

HERE, LET ME --

DO NOT *TOUCH* HIM, HUMAN -- OR YOU'LL FORCE ME TO *DISCIPLINE* YOU!

LISTEN, SIR, I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S *GOING ON* AROUND HERE, BUT I THINK YOU COULD USE AN *EXAMINATION.*

CAN'T YOU CALL OFF THIS FANCY-DAN *POSEUR,* SO I CAN --?

YOUR SARCASM AND YOUR ATTEMPT AT WIT ARE *EQUALLY* LOST UPON ME, PHYSICIAN.

STILL, I *AGREE* THAT Dr. DAMIAN SHOULD BE LOOKED AT BY ONE OF HIS OWN RACE...

...SO I SHALL *LEVITATE* US ALL TO A MORE SECLUDED SPOT, WHERE YOU CAN EXAMINE HIM IN PRIVATE, UNDISTURBED EVEN BY THE *CELESTIALS.*

IT *WORKED!* THOUGH I'VE GOT TO FEIGN SURPRISE, I *REMEMBER* AJAK WELL.

GOOD GOSH!

FOR, AS *THOR,* I WANDERED THIS HEMISPHERE WITH HIM AND HIS FELLOW ETERNALS A *MILLENNIUM* AGO.*

GOT TO *PLAY ALONG,* THOUGH -- FIND OUT THE *GAME PLAN* HERE.

THEN, BEFORE THE STARTLED EYES OF THE OTHER PASSENGERS OF FLIGHT 53, THE COLOR-FULLY GARBED ETERNAL TRANSPORTS THE THREE OF THEM TO AN INTERIOR CHAMBER...

*SEE *THOR ANNUAL #7.* -- ROY.

...ONE NOT UNLIKE THE FLIGHT CONTROL CENTER OF ANY LARGE MODERN AIRPORT.

HERE, WHERE NOT EVEN ONE OF YOUR KIND'S *HYDROGEN MISSILES* COULD PENETRATE, YOU MAY EXAMINE Dr. DAMIAN IN PEACE.

I MAY SEEM *COLD* TO YOU, Dr. BLAKE, BUT I ASSURE YOU I'VE COME TO *CARE* DEEPLY FOR HIM THESE PAST THREE YEARS.

EXAMINE HIM *CAREFULLY*... WITHOUT TRICKERY... IF YOU VALUE YOUR *OWN* LIFE!

WELL, THERE THEY GO!

DR. BLAKE MAY LEARN WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT-- BUT WE CERTAINLY WON'T! IT ISN'T FAIR.

WHAT SAY WE FOLLOW THEM, LISA-- JUST TO KEEP OUT OF MISCHIEF?

SURE. WHY NOT?

AS...

LOOK, AJAK-- IF THAT'S YOUR NAME-- I COULD USE SOME PRIVACY WHILE I'M EXAMINING THE PATIENT. WOULD YOU MIND--?

OF COURSE, MORTAL. WE ETERNALS ARE NOT QUITE SO UNFEELING AS YOU MIGHT IMAGINE; BESIDES, I HAVE BUSINESS WITH THE CELESTIALS.

STRANGE... YOU SEEM FAMILIAR TO ME, SOMEHOW...

BUT NATURALLY, THAT IS IMPOSSIBLE-- SINCE I'VE NOT LEFT THIS CITY IN TEN OF YOUR HUMAN CENTURIES.

TRUE, AJAK-- BUT I WAS HERE--

--EVEN IF I DIDN'T LEARN AS MUCH AS I WANTED TO, AS THE MIGHTY THOR.

IF ONLY I KNEW WHICH SIDE THE ETERNALS WERE TRULY ON, THEN MAYBE I COULD--

IS HE GONE, DR. BLAKE?

Dr. DAMIAN! THEN YOU WERE--

FAKING, YES-- SO WE COULD TALK AWAY FROM THE OTHERS, EVEN AJAK.

HE MEANS WELL, IN HIS WAY-- BUT HE MIGHT NOT TAKE KINDLY TO WHAT I'M ABOUT TO TELL YOU.

"YOU SEE, IT WAS ANOTHER ETERNAL NAMED IKARIS -- THOUGH IN DISGUISE AS A MAN NAMED IKE HARRIS -- WHO HELPED MY DAUGHTER MARGO AND MYSELF FIND THIS VERY CHAMBER, THREE YEARS AGO.

"AS AN ARCHAEOLOGIST, I WAS BETTER PREPARED THAN MOST TO BELIEVE WHAT HE TOLD US:

"THAT THE CELESTIALS, UNTOLD MILLENNIA AGO, WERE FIRST ATTRACTED TO THIS PLANET BY ITS CRUDE LIFE-FORMS.

"AND SO THEY CAME IN THEIR GARGANTUAN STARSHIP-- THE FIRST HOST!

"THE HIGHEST FORM OF LIFE THEN ON EARTH WAS THE *APE*... AND IT WAS A SPECIMEN OF THAT BEAST WHICH WAS TRAPPED AND TAKEN ALIVE ONTO THE *MOTHER SHIP.*

"IKE HARRIS--*IKARIS*--WAS VAGUE ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED NEXT.

"HE DID SAY, HOWEVER, THAT TO THIS APE WAS GIVEN THE *COSMIC CHEMISTRY* THAT WOULD FATHER THE RACES TO COME.

"YES, DR. BLAKE, I SAID *RACES*--AND BY THAT I DO *NOT* MEAN MERELY THE SUB-GENRES OF MONGOLOID, NEGROID, AND CAUCASIAN... BUT *THREE ENTIRE SPECIES:*

"THE *DEVIANT*--STRUCTURALLY UNSTABLE, WITH EACH NEW GENERATION VARYING FROM ITS ANCESTORS IN MANY MONSTROUS WAYS--AN EVOLUTIONARY *FAILURE* OF SORTS...

"THE *HUMAN*--A SPECIES BRED WITH TRUE BALANCE BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL, DESPITE ITS FAULTS...

"...AND THE *ETERNAL*--MORE A CHILD OF THE *GODS* THAN OF THE EARTH.

"THEY ARE *FEW* IN NUMBER--IMMUNE TO TIME AND DEATH, AND LIVE APART FROM OTHER LIVING BEINGS.

"THE DEVIANTS MADE THEIR HOME *BENEATH* EARTH AND SEA--THE ETERNALS ON THE *MOUNTAINTOPS.*

"THEN, WHEN THE CELESTIALS' *SECOND HOST* APPEARED, STILL IN TIME'S DAWN, THE DEVIANTS *RESISTED.*

"THEY HAD CONQUERED *MANKIND*... AND FELT THEIR PERVERTED SUPER-SCIENCE COULD CHALLENGE THE *SPACE GODS* WHO HAD CREATED THEM.

"THEY WERE *WRONG*, OF COURSE...

"...AND THE RESULT OF THEIR FOLLY WAS A MAMMOTH *CATA-CLYSM* WHICH SHOOK THE EARTH--LEAVING ECHOES IN EVERY RELIGION, EVERY MYTHOLOGY ON THE FACE OF OUR PALTRY GLOBE!"

THAT'S, UH, QUITE INTERESTING, SIR... BUT WHY ARE YOU TELLING *ME* ALL THIS?

BECAUSE I'M HOPING THAT, IF YOU ARE *RELEASED* BY THE CELESTIALS, YOU'LL TELL MY *DAUGHTER* I'M STILL ALIVE.

AND STUDYING THE *FOURTH* HOST, EH?

WHAT? BUT THAT MEANS--YOU KNOW ABOUT THE *THIRD!*

"A REASONABLE AMOUNT," *CONTINUES THE SOFT-SPOKEN PHYSICIAN.*

"I KNOW, FOR INSTANCE, THAT A THOUSAND YEARS AGO, *AJAK* AND SEVERAL FELLOW ETERNALS FOUGHT A MUTATE NAMED *DROMEDAN*--AND THAT *THOR*, GOD OF THUNDER, FOUGHT BESIDE THEM.

"NO SOONER WAS DROMEDAN DEFEATED, HOWEVER, THAN THE ETERNALS *TURNED* ON THOR--TO KEEP HIM FROM POSSIBLY INTERFERING WITH THE CELESTIALS' STUDIES OF THE EARTH.

"CAUSING HIM TO *FORGET* HIS JOURNEY TO THE AMERICAS, THEY SENT HIM BACK TO *ASGARD*...

"...JUST AS THE SPACE GODS' HUGE *MOTHER-SHIP* LANDED AMID THE NEWLY-BUILT INCA PYRAMIDS.

"I ALSO KNOW THAT, AT THIS VERY MOMENT *ARISHEM*, MIGHTIEST OF THE CELESTIALS, STANDS ATOP *TWIN PYLONS* IN THE MIDDLE OF THIS CITY...

"...AND THAT HE AND HIS KIND ARE HERE TO RENDER A *FIFTY-YEAR JUDGMENT* WHICH WILL DECIDE, IN 2026 A.D., WHETHER THE EARTH *LIVES* OR *DIES!*

IN FACT, *I'M* HERE SOLELY TO SEE IF I CAN *STOP* THAT JUDGMENT DAY FROM TAKING PLACE!

AMAZING! I--I DON'T KNOW *HOW* YOU LEARNED SO MUCH, YOUNG MAN...

BUT, WHAT CAN *WE*--TWO MERE *MORTALS*--DO AGAINST EVEN *AJAK*, LET ALONE THE *SPACE GODS?*

AS "MORTALS," Dr. DAMIAN... NOT *MUCH!*

BUT, I *CAN* DO A FAIR AMOUNT--

--WHEN I REVERT TO ONE WHO *ISN'T* MORTAL AT ALL-- *NAMELY*--

THWUMP!

--*THOR*, GOD OF THUNDER!

THOR! THE NORDIC DEITY WHO DWELLS AMONG MEN TODAY!

I'D ALMOST CONCLUDED THAT THE MYTHS ABOUT YOU MUST REFER TO *ETERNALS*, AS SO MANY OTHERS DO.

WE OF ASGARD *HAVE* SPAWNED LEGENDS IN OUR DAY.

YET, WE BE OF AS DIFFERENT A RACE FROM THE *ETERNALS* AS FROM *THEE.*

PARDON MY *ADJUSTING* TO YOUR APPEARANCE SO RAPIDLY-- BUT THE EVENTS OF THE PAST THREE YEARS HAVE CONDITIONED ME TO ACCEPT ALMOST *ANYTHING.*

A *NORSE GOD*, DWELLING AMONG MEN-- DISGUISED AS A *DOCTOR*--OR WAS THAT JUST A *ONE-TIME* DISGUISE?

NAY, THOUGH I'VE NOT USED IT OVERMUCH OF LATE... NOR DO I KNOW IF E'ER I SHALL *AGAIN.*

'TIS A *LONG* STORY...

AND ONE WHICH NEEDN'T BE RECOUNTED *NOW*, THUNDERER.

AJAK! THEN THY DEPARTURE WERE BUT A *RUSE*, AND THOU WERT SPYING 'PON US ALL ALONG!

NOT ALL ALONG-- BUT LONG ENOUGH.

IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN, THOR-- AND, AFTER ALL THESE CENTURIES, I HOPE WE MEET AGAIN AS *FRIENDS*, NOT FOES.

YOU TWO *KNOW* EACH OTHER!?

WHETHER WE BE FRIENDS OR FOES, ETERNAL, DOTH DEPEND UPON WHAT YONDER *SPACE GODS* HOLD IN STORE FOR THE *HUMANKIND* I BE SWORN TO DEFEND.

THAT, EVEN *I* DO NOT KNOW.

I EXIST BUT TO *SERVE* THEM HERE... HELP THEM CARRY OUT THEIR *MISSION.*

THAT DOTH SEEM THE ROLE OF A *DOG*, NOT AN *ETERNAL!*

THEIR *OWN*-- WHICH I NEITHER KNOW NOR CARE ABOUT.

BUT, WHAT *BE* THEIR MISSION? BY *WHAT STANDARDS* DO THEY MEAN TO JUDGE HUMANITY, WHEN THEIR HALF-CENTURY'S WAIT BE ENDED?

AJAK, *AJAK*-- I'VE TOLD YOU, YOU SERVE THEM *TOO BLINDLY!*

YOU *KEEP* TELLING HIM, POPS-- WHILE HE'S SHOWING ME WHAT I CAME HERE TO *FIND!*

'TIS A PAIR OF MORTALS FROM THE *PLANE*-- AND THE MAN HATH A *GUN!*

I DON'T KNOW HOW *YOU* GOT HERE, GOLDILOCKS-- THOUGH I'VE GOT A ROUGH IDEA-- BUT STICK AROUND! I MAY *NEED* YOU.

MR. JOHNSON! YOU SAID YOU JUST WANTED TO FIND OUT WHAT WAS GOING ON--!

WE *SHIELD AGENTS* HAVE TO PLAY IT AS IT LAYS, LADY-- COMPLETE TO A PISTOL BUILT TO *SLIP BY* AIRPORT METAL DETECTORS.

NOW, *AJAK*: TWO YEARS AGO, A TRIO OF OUR *OPERATIVES* VANISHED IN THIS AREA-- AND I WAS SENT HERE TO *FIND* THEM!*

YOU'RE GONNA *HELP* ME, OR I'LL--

*ETERNALS #7. --ROY.

AH YES, MR. JOHNSON-- THEIR CODE-NAMES, I BELIEVE WERE *STEVENSON, PARKS* AND *TYLER.*

HUH? HOW'D *YOU* KNOW THAT, OLD MAN-- AND *WHAT'S IN THAT BOX??*

WHY, THE THREE MEN YOU'RE *SEEKING*, OF COURSE.

I'M AFRAID THAT, WHEN THEY TRIED TO FLEE, THE CELESTIALS ELECTED TO *STORE* THEIR FREE-FLOATING *ATOMS* IN THIS BOX.

WHA--?

WHAT GOOD'LL FINDING THEM DO-- IF I CAN'T *DECODE* THEM AGAIN INTO HUMAN FORM?

NO GOOD, I FEAR.

THUS, THE TIME HAS COME FOR *ME* TO REVEAL MYSELF, AS WELL!

BY HEIMDALL'S HORN! THE VERY AIR ABOUT THE WOMAN DOTH SUDDENLY *SHIMMER!*

THEN, *SHE TOO* IS NOT WHAT SHE SEEMED-- A MERE *TOURIST*, WAYLAID INTO ADVENTURE.

BUT, IF SHE'S NOT A *SHIELD* AGENT, THEN MAYBE SHE WORKS FOR-- THE *OTHER SIDE!?*

HOW *NARROW* IS THE COMPASS OF YOUR FEEBLE INTELLECT, Dr. DAMIAN!

I *COULD*, I SUPPOSE, BE CONSIDERED AN EMISSARY OF THE "*OTHER SIDE*"-- BUT ONLY IF BY THAT YOU MEAN THE *DEVIANTS*--

--THOSE FOREVER AT WAR WITH THE *ETERNALS* AND THEIR PLANS FOR COOPERATION WITH THE HATED *HUMANS!*

THOR! AJAK! SHE-SHE'S TOTALLY *CHANGED* HER APPEARANCE! *WHO--?*

MEN HAVE CALLED ME MANY NAMES SINCE I FIRST SOARED AMONG THEM IN THE DAYS OF THE *FERTILE CRESCENT*-- WHEN I DRAGGED THEIR STRONGEST SONS OFF TO MY *SUBTERANNEAN LAIR.*

CALL ME *HECATE*, OR WHAT YOU WILL-- BUT I PREFER TO BE CALLED **ERESHKIGAL**, *QUEEN OF DARKNESS!*

BLACK OF WING AND DARK OF THOUGHT, I TOO WAS SENT HERE TO *SPY* UPON THE CELESTIALS, BY *MY* KIND.

BUT, THE TIME FOR SKULKING IS *PAST*, AND I AM *DONE* WITH FALSE FORMS.

ERESHKIGAL? AYE, I HAVE HEARD EVEN *HELA*, QUEEN OF HEL, SPEAK OF THEE WITH BITTER RESPECT.

HELA? *HAH!* A MERE UPSTART -- CONTENT TO RULE SUCH DOMAINS AS *ODIN* DEIGNS NOT TO ENTER, AS I RECALL HER FROM OLDEN TIMES.

NO MATTER! *WHY* ART THOU HERE, DEVIANT?

SPEAK! FOR, WHATE'ER THY POWERS MAY BE, KNOW THOU THAT IF THOU DOST MEAN *ILL* TO EARTH OR MANKIND, I SHALL OPPOSE *THEE* AS SURELY AS I MAY ETERNAL OR CELESTIAL!

SAY, WOMAN-THING! WHAT DOST THOU IN THIS *CITY OF SPACE GODS?*

WE'LL LEARN THAT IN A MOMENT. MEANWHILE, BACK IN THE MANHATTAN APARTMENT OF THE ETERNAL CALLED SERSI...

IKARIS! MARGO! IS THIS ANY WAY FOR A COUPLE OF NON-PAYING *HOUSEGUESTS* TO ACT?

I GET BACK FROM A *PARTY* TO FIND YOU TWO MOPING AROUND LIKE A PAIR OF *ADOLESCENTS!*

THAT PARTY BEGAN *LAST FRIDAY,* SERSI.

HOW CAN YOU *FROLIC* SO, WHILE *EARTH'S FATE* HANGS IN THE BALANCE?

CAN YOU THINK OF A *BETTER* TIME?

WHAT *ELSE* COULD TAKE MY MIND OFF THE COMING *CATASTROPHE?*

THAT'S WHAT YOU TWO NEED: A *DIVERSION!*

AND *SERSI* IS JUST THE GAL TO *GIVE* IT TO YOU!

NOT THE OLD *CHAIR-TURNED-INTO-A-DOG* TRICK AGAIN, *PLEASE!*

I KNOW STUNTS LIKE THAT GOT YOU PLENTY OF *GOOD PRESS* BACK IN THE DAYS OF *ODYSSEUS* AND HIS CREW... BUT THEY'RE OF SCANT USE TO US NOW.

SPOIL-SPORT!

DON'T BE *TOO* HARD ON HER, IKARIS! REMEMBER HOW HER POWERS HELPED YOU AGAINST *DROMEDAN.**

YOU'RE A BRAVE WOMAN, MARGO--CONSIDERING IT'S BEEN SO LONG SINCE YOU LAST SAW YOUR *FATHER* ALIVE, SOMEWHERE IN THE ANDES.

STILL, SERSI'S ALWAYS LACKED *PERSPECTIVE.*

I RECALL THE DAYS SHE ROAMED *EUROPE*, TURNING INNOCENT PEOPLE INTO WOLVES AND BATS.

ETERNALS #17. --R.T.

NOW, DON'T *FROWN* SO, HIGH-FLYER! AFTER ALL, THERE WERE PLENTY OF *REAL* WERE-WOLVES AND VAMPIRES AROUND, TOO!

UP, BOY-- AND I'LL TURN YOU INTO A DEAD-RINGER FOR *LON CHANEY*... OR MAYBE *JOHN TRAVOLTA*, WHEN--

BRRING

WHAT? I THOUGHT DOGS ONLY WENT "*ARF.*"

THAT WAS THE *DOORBELL*, SERSI.

WHOEVER IT IS, I'M IN NO MOOD TO TALK TO HIM.

I'LL PUT AN *AURA* AROUND MARGO AND MYSELF, TO KEEP US FROM PRYING HUMAN EYES WHILE YOU ANSWER THE DOOR.

YES?

Er... *SPECIAL DELIVERY* FOR APARTMENT *3-G?*

SORRY, THIS IS *13-G*. NOW, IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME, I WAS RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF SOMETHING...

...SO I REALLY CAN'T LET YOU *HOG* TOO MUCH OF MY TIME!

Eh? WHAT--? I FEEL-- *FUNNY*, ALLUVA SUDDEN.

YOU WOULDN'T HAVE SOME *CORN-ON-THE-COB* AROUND, WOULD YOU?

SORRY. BUT, IF YOU'D CARE FOR SOME *PORK SAUSAGE...!*

Uh, NEVER MIND.

SOMEHOW, I JUST LOST MY *APPETITE.*

MOMENTS LATER, HOWEVER, WHEN SERSI LOOKS AROUND, SHE FINDS HERSELF **ALONE**, FOR--

OHH! I-I'M ONLY HUMAN, IKARIS!

I STILL HAVEN'T ADJUSTED TO YOUR **LEVITATING**-- AND TAKING ME **WITH** YOU.

MY APOLOGIES, MARGO--BUT I HAD TO BE FREE TO THINK-- AND FOR ME, FREEDOM MEANS **FLIGHT.**

IT'S **INCREDIBLE!** NOT LONG AGO, I THOUGHT WE HAD **UNITED** THE HUMANS AND THE ETERNALS-- AND THAT, TOGETHER, WE COULD STAND AGAINST ANY MENACE.*

BUT, ONCE YOUR PEOPLE GOT USED TO THE IDEA OF **CELESTIALS** TWO THOUSAND FEET HIGH OBSERVING THEM--THEY WENT BACK TO THEIR OLD **APATHY.**

THEY'VE **ALWAYS** DONE SO, IKARIS --AFTER **EVERY** WAR.

*SEE ETERNALS #16. -- ROY.

YES-- BUT THIS TIME, THERE MAY BE **NO** SECOND CHANCE.

47 YEARS SEEMS A LONG TIME TO **YOUR** KIND, BUT TO US AND TO THE CELESTIALS, IT'S THE **BLINK OF AN EYE.**

WAIT! THAT HUGE **SHADOW** FALLING OVER US--!

IKARIS-- **WHAT IS IT??**

ANOTHER MYSTERY YET TO BE UNRAVELLED.

WHILE, THOUSANDS OF MILES AWAY...

FOR THE FINAL TIME, ERESHKIGAL-- **WHAT DOST THOU HERE?**

I HAVE TOLD YOU: OUR LEADER, **BROTHER TODE,** SENT ME HERE TO FIND OUT WHAT THE CELESTIALS ARE UP TO--

--SINCE ONE OF THEM **DESTROYED** OUR SUB-SEA CITY, AND SENT US INTO **HIDING.**

NO ONE LEAVES THIS CHAMBER TILL I LEARN WHAT I CAME TO LEARN.

THEN, DEVIANT, YOU WILL BE HERE FOR **HALF A CENTURY.**

NOT **ME!** I'M TAKING MY BOXED-UP BUDDIES AND **SPLITTING!**

NONE SHALL LEAVE. **ERESHKIGAL** HAS SPOKEN.

WHERE **THOR** SHALL GO, NONE SAVE **HE** MAY SAY.

Dr. DAMIAN. MAKE THEE READY TO DEPART!

NO! I'M STAYING!

WHAT? ART THOU **MAD,** MAN, TO STAY HERE -- AN ANT BENEATH THE FEET OF GODS FROM SPACE?

I'M A *SCIENTIST*, THOR--AND I MUST STAY HERE UNTIL I'VE PROBED THE DEEPEST *SECRETS* OF--

STAY HERE, THEN, AND *ROT*-- BUT THIS *INCUBATOR* AND I ARE *GOING!*

STOP, HUMAN! SUCH VIOLENCE IS USELESS HERE.

BLAM!

BLAAM!

FOR PERHAPS THE *FIRST* TIME IN A MILENNIUM, AJAK-- THOU AND I BE IN *AGREEMENT.*

HE'S STOPPING MY BULLETS BY WHIRLING HIS *HAMMER* AROUND!

PTING!

PKWNG!

PTWGG!

'TWOULD SEEM THOU DOST KNOW LITTLE MORE OF THE POWERS OF *THOR* THAN THOU DOST OF *CELESTIALS* OR *ETERNALS.*

'TIS BEST, THEN, THAT I *COOL* THINE O'ERZEALOUS ARDOR FOR DUTY--

RAK!

--AS PAINLESSLY AND SWIFTLY AS *POSSIBLE.*

=UNNNH!=

WELL DONE, THUNDERER! I WISH I HAD TIME TO APPLAUD.

BUT, IT OCCURS TO ME I'LL DO BETTER TO EMPLOY THIS *SHROUD GUN*--

--TO KEEP YOU *ALL* HERE-- MORTALS, IMMORTALS, AND DEVIANTS!

APPLES OF IDUNN!

DON'T BOTHER TRYING TO *FLEE*, ERESHKIGAL! YOU AND THE SO-CALLED "*MISTER JOHNSON*" ARE NEXT.

RAIL NOT AT *THEM*, ETERNAL-- WHEN THOU STILL MUST FACE THE WIELDER OF MJOLNIR!

RRIPP!

NO SHROUD, HOWEVER WOVEN, SHALL STAY FOR LONG THE HAND OF *THOR!*

I'D FORGOTTEN, OVER THE YEARS, JUST *HOW* TRULY STRONG YOU ARE, ASGARDIAN.

I'VE NO WISH TO *HARM* YOU, OR ANYONE--

--BUT I MUST *KEEP YOU HERE!*

AND *I* SEE THAT I SHALL LEARN *NAUGHT* HERE, SO I MUST-- *BY THE RAINBOW BRIDGE!*

THY HANDS ARE BECOME AS A *MAGNET*-- PULLING AT MINE ENCHANTED *HAMMER!*

YOU'LL NOT ESCAPE MY MAGNO-BOLTS, THOR.

NOR SHALL I *TRY*, AJAK.

BETTER FAR THAT I LET THY BURSTS *PULL ME ALONG* THUS--

--SO THAT THINE OWN ARTIFICIALLY-INDUCED *ATTRACTION* BE THINE UNDOING!

UNGGNN!

FWOOM!

SLEEP *SOUNDLY*, OLD FRIEND-- AND MINE HEART DOTH SOAR TO SEE THY BREAST RISE AND FALL.

THOUGH BORN ON EARTH, THY LOYALTIES BE *MIXED*-- SO THAT THOU WOULDST SERVE THE *CELESTIALS*, E'EN IF THEY DESTROYED THY PLANET.

MAYHAP WHEN THOU DOST *WAKE* ALONE, THOU SHALT SEE WHAT--

HAVE YOU *FORGOTTEN*, GOD OF THUNDER?

ERESHKIGAL SAYS *NO ONE* IS TO LEAVE.

IF YOU TRY TO FLEE, YOU WILL *ROUSE* THE SPACE GODS-- AND I WON'T BE ABLE TO COMPLETE MY MISSION.

SO, YOU'RE *STAYING*--

-- EVEN IF YOU MUST BE ENCASED IN ICE!

PERHAPS NOW, THOR WOULD SWEAR BY ALL-FATHER ODIN, THOUGH HE HAS VOWED NOT TO DO SO--

--SAVE THAT, HAVING BEEN INSTANTLY FROZEN SOLID, HE CANNOT SPEAK!

RELEASE HIM, DEVIANT! WE RACES OF EARTH MUST NOT WAR AMONGST OURSELVES.

IT IS THE SPACE GODS WHO ARE OUR ENEMIES -- IF EVEN THEY ARE!

YOU SOUND AS IF YOU DOUBT IT, OLD MAN -- AND TRUE, YOU HAVE BEEN AMONG THEM FOR YEARS.

I THINK YOU AND AJAK, BETWEEN YOU, SHOULD HAVE THE ANSWERS I SEEK, SO I'LL JUST EXECUTE THESE OTHER--

YET, EVEN AS SHE RAISES HER WEAPON, A DESPERATE THOR STRAINS SINEWS WHICH HAVE OVERCOME TITAN AND TROLL --

--STRAINS THEM IN ICY, AGONIZING SILENCE--

AND, NEXT MOMENT--

Dr. DAMIAN! WHAT BE THE MOST ESSENTIAL APPARATUS IN THIS CHAMBER?

TH-THE DOME CONTROL! THERE! BUT WHAT--?

THOU SHALT SEE -- IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE ONLY!

SMASH!

NOR DOES ERESHKIGAL FIRE HER ICE-GUN--

-- AS THE MACHINE'S FLYING PIECES FELL HER.

THE ETERNALS BUILT THAT DOME-CONTROL FOR THE CELESTIALS, THOR. NOW, THE DOME WILL BE DISRUPTED FOR A FEW SECONDS -- AND YOU CAN ESCAPE, IF THAT IS YOUR WISH.

THOU STILL WOULDST STAY HERE?

YES! I CAN SERVE BEST BY LEARNING ALL I CAN.

THEN I SHALL LEAVE THE THREE ATOMIZED AGENTS BEHIND, AS WELL, SINCE MAN'S SCIENCE COULD NOT RESTORE THEM -- AND TAKE THE PLANEFUL OF MORTALS WITH ME.

AJAK AND THE CELESTIALS CAN DEAL WITH ERESHKIGAL.

YES! BUT-- WAIT, PLEASE!

THERE'S SOMETHING I MUST ASK OF YOU...!

SECONDS LATER, THE SON OF ODIN EMERGES FROM THE CHAMBER BY A **BACK EXIT** KNOWN TO DANIEL DAMIAN...

THERE BE THE **CELESTIAL** WHICH HATH BROUGHT US HITHER.

I MUST NEEDS **DISTRACT** HIM, IF I AM TO TAKE THE **MORTALS** SAFELY FROM THIS PLACE OF PERIL.

THEN-- LET THERE BE **STORMS**-- AYE, AND **WIND**, AND **LIGHTNING**-- THE POWERS OF THE VERY **ELEMENTS**--

--THE POWER OF **THOR!**

AND WITHIN MOMENTS... THERE ARE.

GREAT **THUNDERSTORMS** OBSCURE THE VISION OF THE CELESTIALS... EVEN OF TOWERING **ARISHEM** ON HIS GREAT PYLONS.

OR SO, AT LEAST, IT DOES SEEM.

SWIFTLY, THE STARTLED **HUMANS** ARE HERDED INTO THEIR STRICKEN JET, AND ITS TORN FUSELAGE SEALED BY THOR'S **MIGHT**...

MUST **HASTEN**-- ERE AJAK OR THE CELESTIALS **RESTORE** THE IMPENETRABLE DOME!

INDEED, MERE INSTANTS LATER--

WE ARE **FREE!** BUT ALREADY, THE **GREAT DOME** HATH REAPPEARED O'ER THE CITY OF THE SPACE GODS.

'TIS PASSING STRANGE! THIS DAY, I REVEALED MY **MIDGARD IDENTITY** TO A HUMAN, AN ETERNAL, AND E'EN A DEVIANT.

BY MINE IMMORTAL EYES, I CANNOT SEE **WHY** SUCH MORTALS AS **TONY STARK**, WHO BE ALSO **IRON MAN**, DO PLACE GREAT STORE BY SUCH TRIVIAL THINGS.

IT BE **MIDGARD** ITSELF WHICH DOTH NEED PROTECTING NOW-- NOR SHALL IT **LACK** THEREOF!

THOUGH THE EARTH BE FORSAKEN E'EN BY THE **GODS OF ASGARD** TO THE TENDER MERCIES OF **TITANS FROM SPACE**-- STILL **THOR** SHALL NOT ABANDON IT TO A FEARFUL FATE.

THIS I DO SWEAR!

NEXT ISSUE: NEW YORK-- AND NEW MENACE!

40¢ CC

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THE MIGHTY

THOR™

THE COMING OF KARKAS --THE MUTATE MARAUDER!

KP/BL

When DR. DONALD BLAKE strikes his wooden walking-stick upon the ground, it becomes the mystic hammer MJOLNIR—and the lame physician is transformed into the Norse God of Thunder, Master of the Storm, Lord of the Living Lightning—and heir to the throne of eternal Asgard....

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY THOR!®

ROY THOMAS WRITER / EDITOR ✶ JOHN BUSCEMA & CHIC STONE ILLUSTRATORS ✶ G. ROUSSOS, COLORIST JOE ROSEN, LETTERER ✶ JIM SHOOTER CONSULTING EDITOR

RECENT TRAGIC AIR-CRASHES--THE RESULT OF AIRLINES GREEDY FOR PROFIT NO MORE THAN OF MORTAL MEN GREEDY FOR TRAVEL--HAVE RESULTED IN EVER-CLOSER SCRUTINY BY REGULATORY AGENCIES OF THE CROWDED SKIES ABOVE AMERICA'S BUSTLING AIR-PORTS.
DEVIANTS AND DOORMEN!
BY ANY STANDARD, HOWEVER, THE JETLINER WHICH SOARS ABOVE THE SKYSCRAPERS AND TENEMENTS OF NEW YORK CITY THIS DAY WILL DOUBT-LESS CAUSE WIDE-OPENED EYES.
FOR, WINGLESS, IT STREAKS AT SUPERSONIC SPEED PRO-PELLED BY MASSIVE CHAINS HELD BY NONE OTHER THAN THOR, GOD OF THUNDER--
--WHO IN TURN IS CARRIED FORWARD AT BLINDING SPEED BY THE AWESOME POWER OF HIS MYSTIC HAMMER MJOLNIR...!
L6424

ON THE DELICATE INSTRUMENTS AT **JFK INTERNATIONAL**, HOWEVER, ALL THREE-- HAMMER AND IMMORTAL AND AIRCRAFT-- REGISTER AS **ONE** VERY SUDDEN, TOTALLY UNEXPECTED, AND QUITE OMINOUS--

--BLIP!

I TELL YOU, IT JUST **APPEARED** THERE-- LIKE IT WAS **SLOWING DOWN** TO TWICE THE SPEED OF SOUND!

YOU'VE GOTTA BE KIDDING! WE HAVEN'T GOT ANY **S.S.T.**'S SCHEDULED TO--

HEY! YOU'RE NOT TRYING TO TELL ME YOU'VE GOT A **UFO** ON THE RADAR, ARE YOU?

IF YOU MEAN A "FLYING SAUCER," **NO**-- BUT I SURE CAN'T **IDENTIFY** THIS FLYING OBJECT!

IT **SEEMS** TO BE A PLANE, BUT IT'S PATTERN IS--

WH--? FORGET ABOUT READING THE **RADAR**, PEOPLE!

JUST LOOK **OUTSIDE!** HURRY!

AND THEY **DO**--

--MAKING THEM EXACTLY **EVEN** WITH BOTH THE V.I.P.'S AND THE ECONOMY-FARE MARCO POLOS IN THE PASSENGER AREA:

HOLY CATS!

TH-THERE'S A **PLANE** COMING DOWN-- AND IT'S PUSHING A **MAN** ALONG IN FRONT OF--

NO! HE'S NOT BEING PUSHED-- HE'S **PULLING** THE PLANE!

AT THIS DISTANCE AND SPEED, NOT EVEN THE SHARPEST EYES CAN TELL THE PRECISE IDENTITY OF THE COLOR-SPLASHED, NOBLE FIGURE WHO NOW GUIDES COLOMBIAN AIRLINES FLIGHT 53 TOWARD A THREE-POINT LANDING ON RUNWAY SEVEN...

...LET ALONE DIFFERENTIATE THAT IT IS THE **HAMMER**, NOT THE MAN, WHICH IS THE POWER OF FLIGHT.

HE'S FLYING!

AMERICAN AI

THE AWESTRUCK OBSERVERS KNOW ONLY THAT, LIVE TO BE A HUNDRED, IT IS UNLIKELY THEY SHALL EVER **SEE** SUCH A SIGHT AGAIN...

...OR PERHAPS EVEN **WANT** TO.

NOW, HOWEVER, AS THE EVER-READY **GROUND CREW** GO INTO GALVANIZED ACTION, PREPARED FOR ALMOST ANY EMERGENCY--EVEN THE SIGHT OF A **MYTHICAL DEITY** BRINGING DOWN A 747--

REEEEEEEEE

--THOR HIMSELF HAS OTHER PLANS:

YON MORTALS REACT WITH SPEED. 'TIS GOOD!

STILL, THEY DO LEAVE ME LITTLE TIME FOR MINE **OWN** NEEDFUL ACTS.

WELL, JUST AS I SEALED THE PLANE'S SIDE ANEW WHEN I DID RESCUE IT FROM THE *CITY OF THE SPACE GODS*--*

RRIPP

--SO 'TIS BUT A MOMENT'S WORK TO TEAR ITS METAL PLATES ONCE MORE **ASUNDER!**

*LAST ISSUE. --ROY.

MR. JOHNSON--OR WHATE'ER THY TRUE NAME BE--I LEAVE IT TO THEE TO EXPLAIN THE FATE OF THY FELLOW PASSENGER, **LISA.**

WHAT'LL I TELL THEM, THUNDER GOD? THAT I'M A **C.I.A. MAN**--AND THAT ONE WOMAN ON BOARD TURNED OUT TO BE SOMETHING SHE CALLED... A **DEVIANT?**

THEY'LL JUST THINK I MEAN SOME KIND OF **PERVERT.**

MATTER OF FACT, EVEN **I'M** NOT SURE WHAT I'D MEAN.

THAT MUST BE **THY** PROBLEM, MORTAL, NOT MINE...

OUT OF THE **WAY,** PEOPLE!

C'MON, GUYS! I'VE GOT A FEW QUESTIONS I WANT TO ASK THAT SO-CALLED **SUPERHERO!**

...THOUGH, IN SOOTH 'TWOULD BE MINE IF I DID **REMAIN** HERE FOR LONG.

HEY! HOLD UP, THERE!

MINE *APOLOGIES*, OFFICER, BUT I FEAR I'VE NO TIME FOR TALK--

--NOT WHILST THE *FATE OF MIDGARD** DOTH HANG HEAVY IN THE COSMIC BALANCE!

WOULD THAT I HAD SPOKEN FURTHER WITH "MR. JOHNSON" CONCERNING CERTAIN MATTERS...

...MOST ESPECIALLY, THE FACT THAT HE SUSPECTS THE *LAME DOCTOR* HE MET IN THE CITY OF THE CELESTIALS IS IN FACT THE ALTER EGO OF *THOR*.

*MIDGARD = EARTH. --R.T.

WHY, I WONDER, DO I CONCERN MYSELF UNDULY OVER A MORTAL IDENTITY I MAY NE'ER USE AGAIN?

'TWAS, AFTER ALL, NE'ER MORE THAN A DEVICE WHICH ALL-FATHER *ODIN* DID USE TO TEACH HIS ONLY BLOOD-SON *HUMILITY*...

...SOMETHING WHICH, METHINKS, MINE OWN *SIRE* COULD LEARN BETTER, AS WELL.

BUT, BEST NOT TO DWELL 'PON MY RECENT *SELF-BANISHMENT* FROM GLEAMING ASGARD.

'TIS THE CHARCOAL-COLORED TOWERS OF *NEW YORK* WHICH NOW DO INTEREST ME... *ONE* IN PARTICULAR...

...*THAT* ONE!

YET, I DARE NOT LAND 'PON ITS ROOFTOP, THERE TO CHANGE INTO *DR. DONALD BLAKE*... NOT IN SIGHT OF MORTAL CHILDREN.

'TIS PASSING *STRANGE!* A MOMENT AGONE, I DID THINK THAT IDENTITY UNIMPORTANT TO ME.

BURN 'ER *IN* THERE, LARRY-BABY!

NOW, HOWE'ER, I MUST ADMIT... 'TIS A MOST *USEFUL* THING, FROM TIME TO TIME...

...TO BE ABLE TO *SHED* THESE IMMORTAL TRAPPINGS...

...AND WALK ONCE MORE AMONGST MEN...

THAM!

...AS A MAN.

JUST HOPE I STILL REMEMBER HOW TO PULL IT OFF, AFTER SO MANY WEEKS.

FUNNY HOW, THE MINUTE I BECOME DON BLAKE AGAIN, EVEN MY *THOUGHT PROCESSES* SEEM TO CHANGE.

EVEN MENTALLY, THE ASGARDIAN SYNTAX JUST FADES AWAY, AS IF THERE REALLY *IS* A--

DR. BLAKE! YOO-HOO, DR. BLAKE!

EH? WHO--?

SURELY YOU *REMEMBER* ME, DON'T YOU, DR. BLAKE?

OF COURSE, MRS... UH...

MRS. WORTHINGTON FORD III...ONE OF YOUR *PATIENTS*, UNTIL YOU JUST DROPPED OUT OF SIGHT, LIKE THE MYSTERIOUS MAN YOU ARE!

OH YES. WELL... I'VE BEEN *TRAVELING* A LOT.

TSK, TSK...SUCH A *WASTE*, AND YOU SO YOUNG!

YOU REALLY SHOULD BE *HELPING* PEOPLE AND ALL, YOU KNOW, INSTEAD OF GALLIVANTING ABOUT. MY *ALLERGIES* HAVE NEVER BEEN THE SAME SINCE--

PARDON ME, MRS. FORD, BUT I HAVE AN APPOINTMENT IN THIS BUILDING...

WHY, WHAT A SMALL WORLD! IT'S *MY* BUILDING, TOO.

I'LL JUST WALK YOU TO THE ELEVATOR.

THAT'D BE... NICE.

ACTUALLY, IT WAS A *LUCKY BREAK* RUNNING INTO THAT WOMAN; OTHERWISE, THE DOORMAN PROBABLY WOULDN'T HAVE LET ME IN...AND I'M ALL OUT OF PRACTICE AT *STONEWALLING* IT IN THE BIG APPLE.

AMAZING! I'M DON BLAKE FOR TWO MINUTES, AND IT'S AS IF I'M A *DIFFERENT PERSON* FROM THOR, EVEN THOUGH--

WELL, I'D BETTER SHELVE MY IDENTITY CRISIS TILL THOR AND I SAVE THE EARTH FROM THE *JUDGMENT OF THE CELESTIALS*... IF WE *CAN!*

AND I'VE NO GREATER *LEAD* ON A WAY TO SAVE IT... THAN THIS UPPER-WEST-SIDE ADDRESS I GOT FROM *DR. DANIEL DAMIAN.*

S. SERSI

NOK NOK

HMMM... NO ANSWER TO BELL *OR* KNOCK, IT SEEMS.

BUT THE DOOR'S UNLOCKED, SO-- *GOOD LORD!*

THIS *WAS* A NICE-LOOKING PAD... *ONCE.*

NOW IT LOOKS LIKE THE AFTER-MATH OF THE *SPINX-ALI FIGHT.*

WELL, LONG AS I'M HERE, I'D BETTER *SEARCH* THE PLACE.

IT'S THE ONLY WAY I CAN HOPE TO FIND-- *EH?* BEHIND ME--!

ALL RIGHT, WHOEVER YOU ARE-- COME OUT OF THE *SHADOWS!*

YOU ARE FAR TOO SMALL, MY FRIEND, TO SEEK TO GIVE ORDERS TO ONE OF *MY* STATURE.

WH--? YOU'RE A BIG ONE, AREN'T YOU?

MY NAME IS BLAKE-- *DR.* BLAKE-- AND I'M LOOKING FOR THE OWNER OF THIS APARTMENT, A *MISS SERSI.*

AREN'T WE *ALL.*

BUT, A *DOCTOR...* THAT'S A NOVEL TWIST.

FROM WHAT I'VE HEARD OF MISS SERSI, SHE WAS MORE THE TYPE TO BE ATTRACTED TO A *PLAYBOY.*

NOW, *WHO* ARE YOU-- AND WHAT ARE YOU *DOING* HERE??

I DON'T KNOW YOUR NAME... BUT WHATEVER IT IS I DON'T RECALL SEEING IT ON THE *DOOR.*

IN FACT, YOU LOOK JUST BIG ENOUGH AND MEAN ENOUGH TO BE THE GUY WHO *TOTALED* IT.

SO, IF YOU DON'T MIND, I THINK I'LL JUST HAVE A LOOK AROUND.

I *DO* MIND.

LOOK, FELLA...I'M A DOCTOR, AND THERE MIGHT BE SOMEONE LYING *HURT* UNDER ALL THIS DEBRIS, SO I'M GOING TO--

NO! IT-- *CAN'T* BE--!

YOU MAY DISPENSE WITH THE PRETENSE, LITTLE MAN.

IF YOU ARE A *DEVIANT*, AS I SUSPECT, YOU HAVE SEEN MANY A *MUTATE* BEFORE...

...THOUGH, ADMITTEDLY, THERE ARE *FEW* TO COMPARE IN SIZE OR STRENGTH TO *KARKAS*!

A *MUTATE*, EH?

THAT'S *ALL*--

THAP!

RRAKKK

--MINE EARS HAD NEED TO *HEAR*!

NOW, VILLAIN, THOU SHALT *TAKE* ME TO THE LADY SERSI AND THAT MOST *SPEEDILY*!

BY THE *SECRET TIDES*! WHAT KIND OF DEVIANT ARE *YOU*??

DEVIANT!? WHAT MANNER OF MONSTER KNOWS NOT THE *LORD OF THE LIVING LIGHTNING* WHEN HE DOTH--

:*UNNHH*!:

I KNOW *LITTLE* OF LORDS, ELECTRICAL OR OTHER--

BUT I *DO* KNOW JUST ENOUGH ABOUT *HUMANS* TO KNOW THEY DO NOT CHANGE THEIR FORM.

WHAM!

ONLY *ETERNALS*, *DEVIANTS*, AND *I* MAY DO THAT...AND YOU ARE NO ETERNAL, SO...

WAK!

VERILY, THAT BE THE FIRST *TRUE WORD* THOU HAST SPOKEN SINCE I DID ENCOUNTER THEE!

SO-- YOU *ADMIT* YOU ARE ONE OF THE *DEVIANTS*-- THAT VILE RACE WHICH SPAWNED ME!

THEN, BY THE SPIRES OF *OLYMPIA*, I SHALL--

THOU DOST THRUST *WORDS* UNBIDDEN INTO MY MOUTH, MONSTER--

SLAM!

--AND I'LL HAVE *NO MORE* OF IT!

NOW, A FINAL TOUCH OF *MJOLNIR*, AND MY SEARCH FOR *SERSI* AND *IKARIS* MAY BEGIN ANEW.

NO! HOLD BACK YOUR CRUSHING BLOW!

EH? I'LL STAY MY HAND A MOMENT MORE...

BUT, BY HEIMDALL'S HORN, IF THIS BE SOME *MUTATE TRICK*--!

IT'S *NO* TRICK! IT'S MERELY THAT I BEGIN TO SUSPECT YOU REALLY *ARE* SOME SORT OF STORM DEITY.

YOU MUST FORGIVE MY IGNORANCE OF THE WAYS OF MEN *AND* GODS... SINCE, AS YOU CAN CLEARLY SEE, I AM *NEITHER*.

MAY I BE SO BOLD TO ASK... *WHY* ARE YOU HERE?

SINCE IT CAN DO NO *HARM* TO TELL THEE...

I DID COME AT THE BEHEST OF *DR. DANIEL DAMIAN*, WHO FELT THE ETERNAL CALLED IKARIS MIGHT HAVE BROUGHT HIS DAUGHTER *MARGO* HERE, IF SHE WAS NOT AT THEIR *COLORADO* DOMICILE.

AS IT HAPPENED, I CAME HERE *FIRST*...TO THE ADDRESS IKARIS GAVE THE ARCHEOLOGIST ERE HE DEPARTED THE *CITY OF THE CELESTIALS*.

I... *THINK* I BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND.

...AND WHAT BE *THY* RELATIONSHIP TO THEM?

SERSI'S *MIRROR*, HAPPILY UNBROKEN, IS THE BEST WAY TO SHOW YOU.

THEN TELL ME... *WHERE* BE IKARIS AND SERSI...

WATCH NOW, AS I *ACTIVATE* IT...

'TIS *IKARIS!* I DO RECOGNIZE HIM FROM HIS RESEMBLANCE TO HIS GALLANT SIRE *VIRAKO,* WHOM I MET IN AN AGE AGONE. *

I KNOW NOTHING OF THAT, BUT *LISTEN* TO MY AMPLIFIED THOUGHTS...!

I-- I STILL CAN'T GET *USED* TO IT, IKARIS...

* *THOR ANNUAL* 7. --ROY.

...BEING *LEVITATED* BY YOU THIS WAY, FLYING OVER THE CITY LIKE A REFUGEE FROM THE LATEST SPECIAL EFFECTS *MOVIE!*

REAL FLIGHT NEEDS *NO* TRICKERY, MARGO... ONLY A MIND WHICH CAN FREE ITSELF FROM GRAVITY'S SHACKLES.

ALL ETERNALS CAN FLY...

...THOUGH NONE CAN MATCH *IKARIS* IN THAT REGARD.

IKARIS! THERE'S THAT HUGE *SHADOW* THAT FELL OVER US BEFORE! *WHAT--?*

I DON'T KNOW! I'LL SEE YOU SAFELY *DOWN,* AND THEN I'LL--

TOO LATE! SOME SORT OF GIGANTIC *VEHICLE* HOVERING ABOVE US-- *GRABBING* US!

A *HARPOON NET*-- SUCH AS I'VE SEEN THE *OLYMPIAN ETERNALS* USE IN THEIR ARENA!

ETERNALS!? THEN THAT STRANGE-LOOKING SHIP-- IS ONE OF *YOURS?*

NOTHING IS CERTAIN IN THE WORLD OF THE *THREE RACES,* MARGO.

STAY BEHIND ME WHEN WE'RE HAULED ABOARD, AND I'LL TRY TO *PROTECT* YOU IF WE MUST FIGHT OUR WAY OUT.

SO! THE MIGHTY IKARIS-- NETTED LIKE A NYMPH OF THE DEEP!

YOU!?

I KNEW IT MUST BE SOMEONE *BRAZEN,* TO DARE ATTACK ME IN MY NATIVE ELEMENT, SO I PLAYED ALONG... BUT I NEVER *SUSPECTED...*

THENA! I'VE NOT SEEN YOU SINCE ALL ETERNALS JOINED TOGETHER IN THE UNI-MIND!*

BUT WHO ARE THESE OTHER TWO, TO ACCOMPANY OLYMPIA'S MIGHTIEST WARRIOR?

TWO YOU MISSED IN OLYMPIA, IKARIS.

SPEAK TO US, NOT HER, ETERNAL! WE'VE TONGUES, YOU KNOW.

AND YOU'VE THE DISPOSITION TO USE YOURS FREELY, EH, REJECT?

*ETERNALS #12.--R.T.

THEY ARE BOTH MUTATES, GOOD IKARIS...THOUGH ENEMIES OF THE DEVIANTS WHO CREATED THEM.

CALL ME REJECT, RATHER!

THIS ONE IS INDEED A REJECT OF THEIRS, WHOM I PREFER TO CALL "SWEET PRINCE."

SO I SHALL... TILL I SEE SOMETHING SWEET ABOUT YOU.

AND THIS IS KARKAS, WHOSE GARGANTUAN FRAME MASKS A HEART OF GOLD... AND THE SENSITIVITY OF A POET.

THENA DOES ME TOO MUCH CREDIT, I'M AFRAID.

IT SEEMS YOU'VE GATHERED EVERYONE YOU COULD FIND, THENA, EXCEPT FOR SERSI.

DON'T MENTION THAT PURVEYOR OF ILLUSIONS TO ME, ETERNAL!

WE OTHER FOUR ARE WARRIORS ALL-- WHILE SERSI'S ONLY SUPER-POWER IS ROUGHLY THAT OF A FRIGHTENED CHAMELEON.

YOU DIDN'T SEE HER BATTLING DROMEDAN WHEN--

WE'VE MORE IMPORTANT THINGS TO DISCUSS THAN A WOMAN WHOSE CHIEF CLAIM TO FAME IS TURNING A BUNCH OF HOMELESS GREEKS INTO PIGS, IKARIS.

I'VE LEARNED THE LOCATION OF THE NEW CITY OF THE DEVIANTS!

SO THAT'S WHY YOU SCOOPED US UP!

ALL RIGHT THEN, LEAD ON-- EVEN IF IT'S HALF A WORLD AWAY!

HARDLY, LEVITATOR. THE NEW LEMURIA IS A GOOD DEAL CLOSER THAN THAT.

I'LL SHOW YOU... AS SOON AS I MAKE THIS HOVERCRAFT INVISIBLE.

MY FATHER ZURAS LOANED THIS SHIP TO ME...

...AND I'D LIKE TO RETURN IT TO HIM WITHOUT *AMERICAN GRAFFITI* SCRAWLED ALL OVER IT.

IKARIS AND I WILL USE OUR POWERS TO GIVE YOU TWO MUTATES THE APPEARANCE OF *NORMAL HUMANS.*

IND

I'M DEVELOPING A BIT OF THAT MENTAL POWER ON MY *OWN,* MILADY.

SO THIS IS WHAT THE HUMANS CALL A *SUBWAY!*

IT FITS ME AS ILL AS THESE *CLOTHES.*

SINCE THEY'RE ALL IN YOUR *MIND,* REJECT, IT'S *YOU* WHO MAKE THEM FIT WELL OR ILL.

ALL THE SAME, WHAT A *FOUL* PLACE THIS STATION IS, TO THE MIND *AND* EYE.

SHALL WE *STOP* THAT SPEEDING TRAIN, THENA, SO IT CAN TAKE US TO OUR DESTINATION?

ON THE CONTRARY, KARKAS... WAIT TILL IT *PASSES.*

THEN, WE CAN GET ON WITH--

HEY, YOU! GET OFF THE *TRACKS!*

WHAT? THAT BLUE-CLAD ONE DARES TO *CHALLENGE* US! I'LL--

THENA! STOP THAT HOT-HEADED FOOL!

DO YOU JUMP THROUGH *IKARIS'* HOOPS NOW, OLYMPIAN?

THERE'S A *TIME* AND *PLACE* FOR VIOLENCE, REJECT.

THIS IS *NEITHER.*

I'LL SIMPLY *IMMOBILIZE* HIM UNTIL WE'VE LEFT.

HE'LL DOUBTLESS THINK HE ONLY *IMAGINED* US.

I DON'T THINK YOU CONVINCED REJECT OF THE *WISDOM* OF YOUR COURSE, THENA.

HE AND I WERE BORN TO *KILL,* IKARIS.

AND SUCH TRAINING DIES *HARD,* EH?

IF IT COMES TO THAT, KARKAS, YOU'LL FIND THAT *THENA* AND I ARE NO SHY, RETIRING FLOWERS, EITHER.

YES...THOUGH YOU, BEING ONE OF THE *POLAR ETERNALS*, ARE MORE DISPOSED TO *SLAY* A FOE, WHEN NECESSARY.

A *VIRTUE* AT LAST!

THIS IS AN *INTERESTING* TRAIL YOU'VE SET US ON, WOMAN...

"FOR, IT WAS NOT FAR FROM HERE THAT YOUR FATHER ZURAS AND I FOUGHT *DROMEDAN THE BRAIN-SNATCHER*, SOME TIME AGO.*

"AND IT'S HERE, YOU SAY, THE DEVIANTS HAVE BUILT A *NEW STRONGHOLD* TO REPLACE THE ONE DESTROYED BY *ESON THE CELESTIAL?*"*

*ETERNALS #10 AND #17, RESPECTIVELY. --R.T.

YES, IKARIS. THEY--

HOLD! WE'RE IN ALMOST TOTAL *DARKNESS* NOW.

NO SENSE GIVING THE DEVIANTS THAT KIND OF *ADVANTAGE*.

WE'VE ADVANTAGES, TOO...

...SUCH AS THE *DEVIATRON*, WHICH DETECTS THE NEARNESS OF DEVIANTS...OR THEIR CREATURES, THE *MUTATES*.

I'VE SET IT TO *IGNORE* KARKAS AND REJECT, OF COURSE.

IT INDICATES WE SHOULD *CONTINUE* IN THIS DIRECTION.

I HOPE WE FIND *ACTION* SOON; I'M GROWING BORED.

YOU TIRE OF EVERYTHING BUT *MAYHEM*, IT SEEMS.

STOP QUARRELING, YOU TWO! *YOUR* FATE, AS WELL AS OURS, IS AT STAKE HERE.

AH! THE SUBWAY TRACKS VEER OFF HERE, BUT THIS SECTION OF WALL SEEMS A *DOOR*.

IT *OPENS* EASILY, IF ONE HAS A SENSITIVE TOUCH.

INTRIGUING! I DON'T THINK NEW YORK'S CITY FATHERS BUILT THIS LITTLE BYWAY.

THE DEVIATRON INDICATES WE'RE STILL HEADED IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION.

PERHAPS ONE OF US, SUCH AS MARGO, SHOULD HAVE STAYED BEHIND.

HMMM... IF YOU'RE DESIROUS OF SPARING YOUR LITTLE PARAMOUR THE SOUNDS OF BATTLE, IKARIS--!

YOU SCORN ALL WOMEN WHO PREFER HIGH HEELS TO HELMET, DON'T YOU, OLYMPIAN?

I SIMPLY MEANT THEN THERE WOULD BE SOMEONE TO TELL SERSI WHERE WE'VE GONE... IN CASE WE DIDN'T RETURN.

BUT, IT'S TOO LATE FOR THAT NOW, IN ANY EVENT...

FOR-- WE'VE ARRIVED!

BESIDES, IKARIS, YOU KNOW I WON'T BE LEFT BEHIND.

THIS IS MY PLANET, TOO, WE'RE TRYING TO SAVE!

YOU'RE AS BRAVE AS YOUR ARCHEOLOGIST FATHER, MARGO.

WHAT NEXT, AFTER ALL THE MUTUAL ADMIRATION?

FIRST, WE DROP THE ILLUSION OF HUMAN CLOTHES-- EXCEPT FOR THE GIRL, HOWEVER, WHOSE GARMENTS ARE REAL.

WE'LL NOT GO SKULKING DISGUISED WHEN WE ENTER THE DEVIANTS' STRONGHOLD...

...BUT STRAIGHT AND TALL, AS BEFITS OUR NOBLE PURPOSE.

AT LAST! A STRATEGY TO MY LIKING.

REMEMBER, REJECT... DO NOT STRIKE BACK UNLESS ATTACKED!

WE'VE COME TO PARLEY WITH THE DEVIANTS NOT TO FIGHT THEM.

FRANKLY, LEVITATOR, I JUST HOPE WE HAVE A CHOICE.

HEADS UP!

ETERNALS!

DEVIANTS!

THEY'RE ATTACKING!

DEVIANTS-- NO! WE COME IN PEACE.

THERE CAN BE NO PEACE 'TWIXT DEVIANT AND ETERNAL-- UNLESS ONE OR THE OTHER BE DEAD.

WHAK!

YOU SEE, HIGH-FLYER? WE'VE NO CHOICE, THEN, BUT TO EMPLOY THE UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE OF FISTS!

NO CHOICE-- ONLY BECAUSE YOU YOURSELF UNDERSTAND NO OTHER TONGUE, FOOL!

FOR MYSELF, I WOULD PREFER THE EXCHANGE OF KNOWLEDGE BE-TWEEN THE THREE RACES.

THWAPP!

A HUMAN WRITER I'VE STUMBLED ACROSS HAS BEGUN TO INTEREST ME.

PERHAPS IKARIS HAS HEARD OF HIM: A MAN NAMED THOREAU.

THIS IS NO TIME FOR IDLE CHATTER, KARKAS.

SNIT!

THOUGH I MUST ADMIT... AS LONG AS YOU CAN TALK AND FIGHT AT THE SAME TIME, I'VE NO OBJECTION TO YOUR DOING BOTH.

HERE, DEVIANTS! HERE'S FOR ALL THE MISERY YOU, MY CREATORS, CAUSED ME --

--WHEN I FOUGHT FOR YOUR AMUSEMENT IN THE ARENA!

RAKK!

YOU DUBBED ME "THE KILLING MACHINE"-- BUT NEVER DREAMED IT WOULD BE YOU I SLEW!

DON'T KILL THEM NOW, EITHER, REJECT!

OUR TASK IS TO REAWAKEN THE DEVIANTS TO THE PROSPECT OF WORKING WITH ETERNAL AND HUMAN ALIKE-- TO SAVE THE EARTH FROM CELESTIAL JUDGMENT.

YOU DON'T WIN SOMEONE OVER BY SLAYING HIS FRIENDS-- EVEN IF THEY ARE DEVIANTS!

BLAM!

YOU WON'T WIN US OVER NO MATTER *WHAT* YOU DO, LEVITATOR!

SURRENDER, ALL OF YOU-- OR I'LL ACTIVATE THIS *IMPLOSION DEVICE!*

*KRO-- THE DEVIANT WARLORD!**

OHHH--!

*SEE EARLY ISSUES OF *THE ETERNALS*. --ROY.

HE HAS *MARGO!* HIS BOMB WOULDN'T KILL US OR HIM -- BUT THE *GIRL--!*

IT SEEMS YOU *SHOULD* HAVE LEFT HER BEHIND, AFTER ALL, IKARIS.

IT IS FOR *YOU* TO DECIDE.

WE *SURRENDER*, KRO! IT'S AGAINST OUR CODE TO LET *INNOCENTS* SUFFER ON OUR BEHALF.

PERHAPS *YOU* SURRENDER, ETERNAL-- BUT I'M ONLY A POOR IF INTROSPECTIVE *MUTATE.*

AND THE *GREATEST GOOD* DEMANDS THAT AT LEAST *ONE* OF OUR PARTY ESCAPE--

STOP HIM!!

KRASH!

--TO MAKE CERTAIN WE'VE NOT STRUGGLED IN *VAIN!*

ABOVE GROUND AGAIN, I USED MY OWN GROWING POWERS TO PASS FOR *HUMAN.*

BUT, THOUGH I TRIED TO PERSUADE MY-SELF I HAD ACTED WISELY, I COULD NOT WASH AWAY THE *SHAME* I FELT...

THUS, I WANDERED HERE, JUST BEFORE *YOU* ARRIVED, THUNDER GOD.

HOWEVER, I FOUND NOTHING BUT THIS DELICATE *FIGURINE* OF THE LADY *SERSI.*

THEN WHERE CAN SHE *BE*, MUTATE?

I... DON'T KNOW. FROM THE *LOOK* OF THINGS...

...ONE OF THE *DEVIANTS* MUST HAVE REACHED HERE AHEAD OF ME, WHILE I WANDERED AROUND UNDER A MENTAL CLOUD.

THAT'S IT! I'VE HEARD *ENOUGH.*

WHAT--?

DOST THOU NOT *SEE*, KARKAS?

THOU DIDST HEAR THE ONE CALLED *THENA* NAME HER A *PURVEYOR OF ILLUSIONS...*

...AND 'TIS OBVIOUS WE BOTH DID *FALL PREY* TO ONE OF THEM!

YOU'VE GOT A REAL *HEAD* ON YOUR SHOULDERS, GOLDILOCKS.

POP!

AND, NOW THAT I GET A *CLOSER* LOOK AT THOSE GODLIKE FEATURES, I'D SUGGEST THAT'S JUST WHERE YOU *KEEP* IT.

THEN, YOU'RE-- *SERSI?!*

YES. A PITY OUR PATHS DIDN'T CROSS, SOME TIME AGO, WHEN WE WERE BOTH IN OLYMPIA FOR THE *RITUAL OF THE UNI-MIND.*

WERT THOU *HIDING*, THEN, FROM SOME LOOKED-FOR *DEVIANT ATTACK* WHICH DID NOT COME?

YOU'VE BEEN LISTENING TO THAT SOUNDTRACK ALBUM OF *THENA'S* TOO LONG, TALL-BLOND-AND-SEXY.

THERE WAS A *BATTLE ROYAL* HERE, ALL RIGHT-- BUT *I* WON IT!

BUT, JUST THEN, I HEARD FIRST THE *MUTATE*, THEN *YOU*, COMING-- AND I NEEDED TIME TO *RECHARGE* MY POWERS

SO I MADE MYSELF LOOK LIKE A FIGURINE, AND MY CAPTIVE LIKE A PLASTER-OF-PARIS *CAT.*

YOU SHOULD HAVE *NOTICED* IT DIDN'T MATCH THE *DECOR.*

VOILA, AS I ONCE TAUGHT A FRENCH ILLUSIONIST TO SAY!

AN UNCONSCIOUS *DEVIANT*-- BOUND HAND AND FOOT!

MORE SOULS THAN *THENA* HAVE SOLD THEE SHORT, METHINKS.

THANKS, HANDSOME.

RIGHT NOW, THOUGH, THAT *SIREN* WOULD SEEM TO INDICATE THAT ONE OF MY SNOOPIER NEIGHBORS HAS CALLED THE *CONSTABULARY.*

REEEE

ONE COULD SPEND AN *ETERNITY* IN DEALING WITH THE MINIONS OF MIDGARD.

RATHER, 'TWOULD SEEM MEET THAT WE DO *DEPART*, ERE THE POLICE ARRIVE.

WILD! UH-- YOU DON'T MIND BRINGING THE *DEVIANT*, DO YOU, KARKAS?

HMMMM...

HOLY--! WOULD YOU LOOK AT THAT?

SERSI, I DID THINK 'TWAS SAID BY IKARIS THAT ALL ETERNALS MAY LEVITATE, TO SOME DEGREE.

OH, WE CAN... WE CAN.

THEN WHY HANG'ST THOU UPON MY NECK?

A HUMAN NAMED LOUIE ARMSTRONG ONCE SAID IT BEST, BLONDIE...

"IF YOU GOTTA ASK THE QUESTION, YOU AIN'T NEVER GONNA KNOW THE ANSWER!"

HE MUST HAVE BEEN A MOST ELOQUENT FELLOW.

WE MAY TALK HERE UNDISTURBED, MANY BLOCKS FROM THY DWELLING.

MAYBE SERSI'S CAPTIVE CAN TELL US A MORE SECRET APPROACH TO THE CITY OF THE DEVIANTS.

IF HE DOESN'T, THERE'LL BE ONE MORE TV ANTENNA ON THIS ROOFTOP.

WORSE YET: I'LL TURN HIM INTO A HUMAN FOR GOOD!

NO-- NOT THAT, ETERNAL!

THEN TALK!

TH-THERE IS AN UNGUARDED ENTRANCE-- BENEATH A CERTAIN BOULDER IN CENTRAL PARK.

I'LL SHOW YOU TO IT-- BUT PLEASE DON'T TURN ME INTO A HUMAN BEING!

THEY'RE SO UNSPEAKABLY HIDEOUS...!

THIS WILL GIVE ME A CHANCE TO REDEEM MYSELF IN THE EYES OF THE LADY THENA-- YES, EVEN IN THOSE OF REJECT.

I'LL SHOW THENA MY TRUE WORTH!

THOSE BE BUT PETTY GOALS, BESIDE OUR TRUE ONE:

TO PERSUADE THE DEVIANTS TO JOIN US, IN SAVING THIS WORLD WE ALL DO SHARE!

WHILE, HUNDREDS OF FEET BELOW WHERE THESE THREE STAND...

HAH! COME ON IN, ALL OF YOU-- BE YOU MUTATE, ETERNAL, OR ASGARDIAN!

THE SUBTERRANEAN WATER IS FINE-- FOR DYING!

NEXT: DOOM.. IN THE DOMAIN OF THE DEVIANTS!

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THE MIGHTY THOR®

THE HAMMER OF THOR-- IN THE HANDS OF *WARLORD KRO!*

NOW, IN TRUTH-- **MANKIND STANDS DOOMED!**

pollard & MILGR

When DR. DONALD BLAKE strikes his wooden walking-stick upon the ground, it becomes the mystic hammer MJOLNIR— and the lame physician is transformed into the Norse God of Thunder, Master of the Storm, Lord of the Living Lightning— and heir to the throne of eternal Asgard....

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY THOR!®

MAYHEM UNDER MANHATTAN!

THE FRENCH HAVE A WORD FOR IT, MY FRIENDS: *DEJA VU*...

...THE DISTINCT FEELING THAT ONE HAS SEEN SOMETHING *BEFORE*, WHEN IN REALITY ONE HAS NOT.

THIS *SUBWAY TUNNEL*, FOR INSTANCE...!

THE FRENCH HAVE A WORD FOR *EVERYTHING*, KARKAS; I COULD TELL YOU THINGS I SAW DURING THE *FRENCH REVOLUTION*...

PLEASE *SPARE* US THINE AMOROUS RECOLLECTIONS, SERSI.

WE MUST NEEDS BEND OUR EVERY EFFORT TO REACH THE *CITY OF THE DEVIANTS*, ERE THEY DO REALIZE WE DRAW NEAR THEIR SUBTERRANEAN CITADEL BY THE *ALTERNATE ROUTE* REVEALED TO US BY A CAPTIVE DEVIANT.*

*THANKS, THUNDER GOD, FOR SYNOPSIZING THE CATACLYSMIC CLIMAX OF LAST ISSUE'S TALE. --ROY.

LG451

ROY THOMAS
WRITER/EDITOR
welcomes
KEITH POLLARD
NEFARIOUS NEW PENCILER-IN-RESIDENCE

and so do
CHIC STONE, EMBELLISHER
JOE ROSEN, LETTERER
GLYNIS WEIN, COLORIST
JIM SHOOTER, CONSULTING EDITOR

DOUBTLESS THOU WILT REJOICE, KARKAS, TO RESCUE THY FRIEND CALLED ***REJECT*** FROM THE EVIL ONE'S CLUTCHES.

NO MORE THAN I HOPE WE CAN RESCUE THE ***OTHER*** CAPTIVES-- IKARIS, THENA, AND THE HUMAN FEMALE NAMED MARGO DAMIAN.

THOU DOST PROTEST O'ERMUCH, LOOMING ONE. THINE OWN WORDS, EARLIER, DID CONVINCE ME THERE BE A GREAT ***BOND*** 'TWIXT THEE AND THY FELLOW MUTATE.

AND WHAT OF THY FEELING FOR THE NOBLE ***IKARIS***, SERSI?

NO COMMENT, GOLDILOCKS...

...BUT IF YOU'D CARE TO ASK ME THAT NEXT FRIDAY AT STUDIO 54...

HOW GOES YOUR ***TRAP***, WARLORD KRO?

ABOUT TO BE ***SPRUNG***, BROTHER TODE...

"THE THREE INTRUDERS HAVE LEFT THE NEW YORK SUBWAY SYSTEM...

"...AND ARE NOT FAR AWAY, THINKING THEMSELVES ***UNDETECTED***.

"THEY'RE ABOUT TO DISCOVER THE ***ERROR*** OF THEIR DIVERGENT WAYS..."

THOR! KARKAS! I SENSE DANGER HERE!

I WAS RIGHT! ***DEVIANTS!***

SURRENDER, INTERLOPERS!

SLAY THE ***MUTATE***, IF YOU GET THE CHANCE, FELLOW DEVIANTS!

PERHAPS THE ASGARDIAN, LIKE ALL ETERNALS, CANNOT BE KILLED--

BUT, OUR ***FLAMERS*** CAN MAKE THEM WISH THEY WERE DEAD!

THESE UGLY ONES SEEM GROSSLY *MIS-INFORMED* CONCERNING THE STRENGTH INHERENT IN A GOOD RIGHT ARM, THUNDER GOD--

-- WITH EMPHASIS ON THE "*GOOD.*"

MAYHAP 'TIS TIME WE THREE DID *DISABUSE* THEM OF THEIR FOLLY.

SERS! WHERE ART THOU, ETERNAL?

THWAM!

FROM CREATION'S DAWN TO RAGNAROK'S LAST GLEAMING, KARKAS, EVIL HATH E'ER MISTAKEN FORBEARANCE FOR WEAKNESS... PEACEFUL INTENT FOR COWARDICE.

HERE, ASGARDIAN! I AM *NO FIGHTER* AS YOU AND THE MUTATE ARE; I WOULD ONLY BE IN THE WAY.

I MUST FLEE! I-- I AM *SORRY*--!

SERS!! WAIT THEE!

SHE'S *GONE,* THOR-- BUT YOU AND I CAN HANDLE THESE INEPTS ALONE, CAN'T WE?

AYE! IN SOOTH, THE FRIVOLOUS FEMALE DID PROVE *UN-WORTHY* TO STAND ALONGSIDE US, FOR ALL HER GLIB WORDS.

HAH! THERE ARE ONLY TWO OF THEM NOW.

ACTIVATE FLAMERS!

SHOOSH!

=UNNH!=

MOST VILE HELLSPAWN!

IN UNENDING DARKNESS DO YE DWELL BENEATH THE TEEMING STREETS OF A CITY OF MORTALS--ALL THE WHILE PLOTTING TO REDUCE THEM TO ABJECT SLAVERY.

WITH THE VOICE OF RIGHT DO I SAY UNTO YE--

ENOW!

FRAM!

THAT ACCURSED HAMMER HAS DESTROYED OUR LARGEST, MOST POWERFUL FLAME-GUN.

THEN, THOUGH WE RISK TOO-EARLY DETECTION BY THE LOATHESOME HUMANS ABOVE--I MUST TAKE EMERGENCY MEASURES!

THOR! LOOK OUT!

AH--KARKAS! I REJOICE THAT THOU HAST THROWN OFF THE EFFECTS OF--

WHAT IN THE NORN QUEEN'S NAME? THE WALL--SLIDING BACK--TO REVEAL A GRID OF GLOWING GLOBES--!

AND THEN--THOSE EERIE SPHERES BEGIN TO HUM.

NEXT INSTANT, WITH A BLINDING CRACKLE OF SEARING **LIGHT**--

ZZRAKKK

TH-THAT *SOUND!* I-- CANNOT--

KARKAS FALLS--AND EVEN THE POWERFUL FIGURE OF **THOR** HIMSELF IS LOST FROM SIGHT, AS ONLY A JAGGED OUT-CROPPING OF **ROCK** PREVENTS HIS SHARING THE HUGE MUTATE'S FATE.

THEN, AS THE DEVIANT-MADE LIGHTNING FADES, A FAMILIAR FORM STEPS ONCE MORE FROM THE SHADOWS, TO FADE--

DEVIANTS! STEP THOU FORWARD-- AND **PERISH!**

MINE **MALLET** WILL--

OH, WHY DON'T YOU **STOW** THE HISTRIONICS, ASGARDIAN...

THERE'S A LIMIT TO WHAT EVEN **YOU** CAN DO ALONE, YOU KNOW.

AND WHO ART **THEE**, VILLAIN?

WARLORD KRO, AT YOUR SERVICE. NOW, SURRENDER YOUR ENCHANTED **HAMMER** TO ME, OR MY WARRIORS WILL OPEN FIRE-- ON DOWNED **KARKAS!**

HE'S **NOT** IMMORTAL LIKE YOU AND THE ETERNALS, AFTER ALL.

THEN--I'VE NO CHOICE, IT SEEMS.

TH-THOR--**NO!** LET THEM SLAY ME! I DON'T--

SUCH **NOBILITY** FROM ONE SO REPULSIVE.

AH YES...THE **HAMMER**, PLEASE.

FOR UNTOLD YEARS WE HAVE HEARD LEGENDS OF IRRESISTIBLE **MJOLNIR**, AND HOW NONE SAVE THOR CAN HOLD IT.

BUT THEN, THOSE LEGENDS SPOKE OF **GODS** AND **HUMANS**-- NOT OF **DEVIANTS!**

THE **HAMMER OF THOR IS OURS!** WHAT CAN STAND **AGAINST** US?

NOTHING! **NOTHING**, GREAT KRO!

WHILE, A WORLD AND TIME AWAY...

WHY HAST THOU ***SHOWN*** ME THIS SCENE OF THOR'S MOST DISMAL DEFEAT, MIMIR?

NAY, ANSWER NOT, O FIERY AND VENGEFUL ***WELL OF WISDOM***... I KNOW THE REASON FULL WELL.

AYE, WRETCHED ODIN! WHAT BETTER WAY TO TORMENT THE ***FATHER***, EVEN OF A WAYWARD, WILLFUL SON--

--THAN TO SHOW HIM THAT OFFSPRING IN DIRE ***DANGER***?

ALL-FATHER! DIDST THOU, IN TURN, SUMMON ***US FOUR*** HERE ONLY THAT WE MIGHT SHARE THINE ANGUISH?

THE THUNDER GOD-- ***HELPLESS!*** 'TWAS NOT A SIGHT ***VOLSTAGG'S*** EYES DID LONG TO SEE.

AND WOULD THAT I HAD ***NO*** EYES, RATHER THAN ONE, TO SEE IT WITH, VOLUMINOUS ONE.

GREAT SIRE! LET THE FOUR OF US GO FORTH TO ***MIDGARD****-- AND TO THE VILE CITY BENEATH IT-- TO ***RESCUE*** THY BANISHED SON-- MINE OWN BELOVED!

THE LADY ***SIF*** DOTH SPEAK FOR US ALL, GOOD ODIN.

*MIDGARD= EARTH. --ROY.

I SAY THEE ***NAY!***

REVILE ME IF YE MUST, FOR REFUSING SUCH HEARTFELT REQUESTS--

YET, 'TWAS NOT TO SEND YE TO MIDGARD'S ***SUBTERRANEAN DEPTHS*** THAT I DID SUMMON YE... BUT RATHER FOR ***OTHER*** MISSIONS, OF GREATER IMPORT TO ***ASGARD***, ITSELF!

WHAT GOOD TO SAVE THE REALM ETERNAL, ALL-FATHER-- WHEN ITS MOST VALIANT ***SON*** STANDS IMPERILED, E'EN HIS MIGHTY ***HAMMER*** STRIPPED SOMEHOW FROM HIM?

FANDRAL STANDS WITH ***HOGUN THE GRIM***, SIRE.

AS DOTH ***VOLSTAGG.***

COME THEN, MY WARRIORS THREE! LET US HIE TO ***MIDGARD***, WHERE--

ONCE *MORE* I MUST FORBID THEE, SCIONS OF ASGARD!

AND WHEN *ODIN* DOTH COMMAND, *ALL* IN THE GLEAMING REALM MUST BEND THE KNEE!

W-WE *DO* SO, MILORD... THOUGH IN MUTED *PROTEST.*

WITHIN MOMENTS, TWIN MISSIONS HAVE BEEN ASSIGNED THE QUARTET OF ASGARDIANS...

GO NOW, MY CHILDREN--AND CONCERN YOURSELVES NO MORE WITH THE FATE OF THOR!

DOST THOU NOT WISH THINE *OWN* WORRIES COULD BE DISMISSED AS EASILY, LORD ODIN?

SILENCE, THOU BURNING HEAD OF FIRE!

THE OTHERS ARE DEPARTED NOW, AND I NEED *STAY MINE HAND* NO LONGER.

MOCK ME AGAIN, AND I'LL *SNUFF OUT* THY FLAMES FOR ALL TIME!

I'LL KEEP MY PEACE, LORD ODIN-- SAVE TO REMIND THEE THAT *I* CAN SEE MORE OF THE UNGUESSED FUTURE THAN *THOU* CANST.

THAT I DO MOST SADLY *KNOW*, MIMIR.

AND, WHILE 'TIS TRUE, I DO KNOW ALSO THAT *JUSTICE* DOTH SLEEP IN ASGARD FULL AS SOUNDLY AS ON MIDGARD.

AS, BENEATH MANHATTAN'S STREETS...

WE HAVE THEM *ALL*, BROTHER TODE.

I EVEN HAVE THE *HAMMER OF THOR*, WHICH HE DID SURRENDER TO ME, RATHER THAN SEE HIS ALLIES SLAIN.

YOU HAVE *REDEEMED* YOURSELF IN OUR EYES FOR YOUR PREVIOUS FAILURES, WARLORD KRO...AT LEAST FOR THE PRESENT.

STILL, ARE YOU POSITIVE THE *BELTS OF BEMUSEMENT* ARE SECURE-- ESPECIALLY ON THE ETERNALS AND THE THUNDER GOD?

I *AM!* STILL, TO PLEASE YOU, THEY SHALL BE CHECKED AGAIN

THE ASGARDIAN'S BAND IS SET AT *FULL POWER*, WARLORD.

SEE HOW HE CAN BARELY *STAND*?

EXCELLENT! ER-- STAND AWAY, DEVIANT! I MYSELF WILL SEE TO *THENA'S* BONDS!

AND TO WHAT DO I *OWE* ALL THIS PERSONAL ATTENTION, KRO?

YOU *KNOW* THE REASON, THENA! WE WERE OTHER THAN FOES ONCE-- MORE EVEN THAN *FRIENDS!*

I COULD INDUCE TODE TO SPARE YOU, IF YOU WOULD ONLY--

THOSE DAYS ARE FOREVER *GONE*, WARLORD.

WE KNEW EACH OTHER IN WHAT THE *BARD* WOULD TERM MY "*SALAD DAYS*, *WHEN I WAS GREEN IN JUDGMENT.*"

YOU DARE QUOTE A *MORTAL PLAYWRIGHT* TO ME!?

WISDOM IS WISDOM-- HOWEVER LOWLY AND EPHEMERAL THE SOURCE.

ACCEPT IT, ONCE AND FOR ALL: WHATEVER WAS BETWEEN US WAS OVER *MILLENNIA* AGO.

AS YOU *WISH*, ETERNAL...

BROTHER TODE! THE PRISONERS ARE ALL SECURE--

MORTALS, MUTATES, ETERNALS, AND ASGARDIANS ALIKE!

WELL DONE, WARLORD...

PREPARE THEN THE *ATOM-DISPLACER*, WITHOUT DELAY!

IF THESE SIX WILL NOT *JOIN* US IN OUR WAY TO ENSLAVE THE LAND-CRAWLING HUMANS ABOVE-- THEY MUST BE *DESTROYED* AT ONCE.

AND THOSE WHO *CANNOT* DIE-- SHALL SOON FERVENTLY *WISH* THAT THEY COULD!

WAIT, BROTHER TODE! HEAR ME OUT!

WHAT, IKARIS? HAVE YOU A LAST FEW WORDS, BEFORE THE VERY CELLS THAT MAKE UP YOUR THROAT ARE REDUCED TO RANDOM ATOMS?

I HAVE!

YOU KNOW WELL THAT THE CELESTIALS' FOURTH HOST LANDED ON EARTH THREE YEARS AGO-- TO BEGIN THEIR FIFTY-YEAR JUDGMENT.

IF THE EARTH IS JUDGED UNWORTHY AT THAT TIME, THE ENTIRE PLANET WILL BE REDUCED TO A MOTE OF DUST--AND YOU DEVIANTS WITH IT!

THUS, HUMANS-- ETERNALS-- DEVIANTS--ALL MUST JOIN FORCES, TO STAVE OFF THIS FATE...

AND YOU'D ASK US DEVIANTS TO CO-OPERATE NOT ONLY WITH YOU ETERNALS--BUT WITH MERE HUMANS!?

FOR THE COMMON SURVIVAL, YES.

NEVER!

ONCE BEFORE, POLAR ETERNAL, WE DEVIANTS CHALLENGED THE SPACE GODS--

AND LOST!

YES, BUT WE'VE MADE MANY WEAPONRY ADVANCES SINCE THEN, WHICH EVEN THE CELESTIALS DO NOT KNOW ABOUT.

THIS TIME, ALSO, WE HAVE THE HAMMER OF THOR, AS WELL--AND PERHAPS EVEN THE FABLED SON OF ODIN HIMSELF, IF HE'S BECOME WISE AT THE LAST MOMENT.

YOU REFUSE MY PLEA, THEN?

I DO, IKARIS...

NOW, BE SILENT--FOR I'VE NO MORE INTEREST IN YOU.

WHAT SAY YOU, THUNDER GOD? YOU STAND SO STILL, FOR ONE WHOSE ELOQUENCE IS LEGEND THROUGHOUT THE UNIVERSE.

I HAD TO KEEP QUIET, LORD OF FROGS--

EH?

ELSE, MY LACKLUSTRE SYNTAX MIGHT BETRAY THE FACT--

--THAT I WASN'T REALLY THOR, AT ALL--

--BUT RATHER A CERTAIN MISTRESS OF ILLUSIONS.

SERS!!

BUT, IF THAT'S TRUE, THEN WHAT DO I HOLD IN MY--?

A *STICK!?*

A SIMPLE *CANE*, WARLORD-- GIVEN ME BY THE REAL THOR, AND CHANGED BY MAGIC TO THE SEMBLANCE OF THE MYSTIC *HAMMER.*

THOR, KARKAS, AND I HAD ARRANGED IN ADVANCE FOR ME TO *"FLEE"* IF A DEVIANT ATTACK CAME...

AND, WHEN THE MUTATE FELL, IT WAS MY CHANCE TO TAKE THE ASGARDIAN'S *PLACE!*

BUT THEN-- *WHERE IS THOR??*

*AS IF IN ANSWER, A FRAIL **BLOND FIGURE** SUDDENLY APPEARS FROM BEHIND A NEGLECTED CURTAIN...*

I'LL TAKE YOU *TO* HIM, FRIEND--

--IF YOU'LL JUST HAND ME BACK MY *WALKING-STICK!*

WHO--?

*DON BLAKE'S REPLY IS A LAME-FOOTED, HALTING **LEAP**--*

*--WHICH SUCCEEDS SOLELY BY VIRTUE OF ITS SHEER, UNEXPECTED **AUDACITY.***

THERE! HE LET THE CANE HIT THE *GROUND!*

THUMP!

LIGHTNING-- FROM OUT OF NOWHERE!

NO MATTER! WHEN IT FADES, *WARLORD KRO* WILL SOON DISPOSE OF--

--THOR!?

MINE *HAMMER*, IF THOU WILT, DEVIANT.

I DID ABANDON IT TO *SERSI*, WHO IN TURN DID PASS IT, MAGICALLY TRANSFORMED, UNTO *THEE*... BUT NOW 'TIS TIME I HAD IT BACK.

NO! I--I CANNOT *LIFT* IT, NOW THAT IT'S CHANGED ITS FORM-- BUT I'LL *NEVER LET GO OF IT!!*

NEVER!

VERILY, "NEVER" DOTH SEEM A WORD YE DEVIANTS DO TOSS ABOUT MOST *FREELY.*

AIEE

NIGH AS FREELY, METHINKS...

...AS *I* DO TOSS ABOUT *THEE!*

SLAMM!

NEXT MOMENT, EVEN AS SERSI FINISHES FREEING THE OTHER FIVE CAPTIVES --

ON GUARD, ETERNALS AND MUTATES--

AND KEEP THEE *BACK* FROM HARM'S WAY, MARGO DAMIAN--

THE *MOMENT OF TRUTH* BE NIGH AT HAND!

FWOOM!

IN MY READINGS, THOR, I'M FINDING THAT TRUTH IS A MOST *RELATIVE* THING.

DON'T PHILOSOPHIZE, KARKAS! *FIGHT!*

I'LL *RACE* YOU TO SEE WHO GETS THE MOST DEVIANTS!

WARLORD KRO! YOU HAVE FAILED ME AGAIN, IT SEEMS.

YOU ARE WRONG, MOST REVERED MASTER...

FOR, HAVE WE NOT AT OUR DISPOSAL THE CREATURE I HELPED DEVELOP-- THE POWERFUL PROTOTYPE OF A NEW KIND OF SUPER-MUTATE--

--THE ONE WE CALL METABO?

ARRRGH

HE'S JUST ANOTHER MUSCLE-MAN AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED, KRO. I'LL--

DEMONS OF THE PITS!

THENA! HE SEEMS IMMUNE TO OUR EYE-BLASTS!

MORE THAN THAT, ETERNALS: HE ABSORBS THEM...

AND HIS EERIE, UNSTABLE METABOLISM INSTANTLY GIVES THEM BACK, MAGNIFIED BY HIS OWN HUGE BODY!

UNNNH--!

OHHH--!

BUT THEN, NOT BEING PRIVY TO THE SECRET FILES OF THE DEVIANTS, YOU DON'T KNOW THAT, DO YOU...?

NOR DO KARKAS AND THE REJECT-MUTATE WHOM THENA HAS CHRISTENED "SWEET PRINCE"...

COME ON, KARKAS! THIS IS MY KIND OF FREE-FOR-ALL NOW!

WAIT! I THINK I'VE AN INKLING OF HOW HE DID THAT...

AND, IF I'M CORRECT, IT WON'T HELP TO-- AAAAAH!

ZZAP!

THE SUPER-MUTATE TAKES REJECT'S FIRST BLOW--

WHAM

--THEN PAYS IT BACK IN KIND!

KARKAS BE THE *WISER* OF THAT TWAIN, FOR ALL HIS UGLINESS. WE MUST NEEDS DEVISE *NEW* STRATEGY TO--

THERE'S *NO TIME* FOR THAT, THOR.

THE TWO MUTATES WILL BE *DEAD* BY THEN--

--SOMETHING *IKARIS* WILL NOT ALLOW!

GRARR

AH, SO YOU *CAN* TALK--OR MAKE *SOUNDS*, AT LEAST.

THEN, LET ME HEAR YOUR *SCREAM OF PAIN*-- AND I'LL STRIKE NO MORE!

I'VE NO INTEREST IN FIGHTING A POOR, DUMB *BRUTE*.

THAK!

BUT, INSTEAD OF FALLING OR CRYING OUT--

BY THE POLAR WINDS!

IT ATTACKS-- WITH *RENEWED* STRENGTH!

*NOW, A GREAT MASSIVE **WEIGHT** SLAMS THE MASTER OF FLIGHT TO THE FLOOR--*

*--AS FOUR HUGE **FISTS** PUMMEL HIM WITH BESTIAL POWER!*

*NEXT MOMENT, BEFORE IKARIS CAN REGAIN HIS FOOTING-- THE DEVIANTS' CREATION **HURLS** HIM BODILY ACROSS THE WIDE CHAMBER--*

*--SUCCEEDING AS MUCH BY THE ETERNAL'S STARK **SUR-PRISE** AS BY ITS OWN MIGHT AND MAIN.*

IT SEEMS -- YOU WERE *RIGHT*, ASGARDIAN.

FOR ALL THY YEARS, FRIEND, THOU HAST NOT FOUGHT BEINGS AS STRANGE AS ONE I KNOW CALLED THE *ABSORBING MAN* --

-- WHO, IN DIVERSE WAYS, YON MONSTER DOTH *RESEMBLE*.

NOW, TAKE THEE BUT A FEW MOMENTS TO *REGAIN* THY FULL PROWESS --

FOR, WE SHALL SORELY *NEED* IT, WHEN I HAVE DISPOSED OF --

YET, AS THE LUMBERING SUPER-MUTATE CHARGES INTO HIS NEWFOUND PREY --

--THE SCENARIO SEEMS NOT WILDLY DIFFERENT FROM THAT WHICH, SECONDS EARLIER, STARRED IKARIS.

BLAM!

THY MALEVOLENT MASTERS HAVE MADE THEE *STRONG* INDEED, MUTATE...

EWOOM!

STILL, THOU DOST NOW FACE *THOR*, GOD OF THUNDER --

--*THOR*, LORD OF THE *LIVING LIGHTNING* --

BTOK!

THRAKK!

"...THOR!

THE THING CALLED METABO FALLS-- FOR IT WAS CREATED TO ABSORB THE POWER OF ETERNALS, NOT THOSE OF A NORSE DEITY.

AND, IN THE MEANTIME...

THIS WAY, BROTHER TODE!

YOU KNOW THE WAY TO FLEE, KRO, IF NOTHING ELSE.

HURRY, DEAR DRAGONA!

YOU WRONG ME, SIRE. IT WAS OUR OWN FOOLHARDY DEVIANT WARRIORS WHO FAILED YOU, NOT I.

YET, THE ETERNALS AND THEIR ALLIES WILL NOT ENJOY THE FRUITS OF THEIR VICTORY--

-- WHEN, IN SECONDS, IT ROCKS BENEATH THEIR VERY FEET, WHILE YOU AND I SHALL BE--

GOODBYE, WARLORD.

MASTER! NO! DON'T LEAVE ME!

I HAVE SERVED YOU WELL--!

AND NEVER BETTER THAN BY PERISHING, WHILE I MAKE MY ESCAPE IN A ROCKET FAR TOO SMALL FOR THREE!

AS--

EARTHQUAKE!!

THIS IS MORE OF BROTHER TODE'S DOING, I'LL WARRANT!

IKARIS HAS NO TIME, HOWEVER, TO INVESTIGATE THE TRUTH OR FALSITY OF HIS GUESS--

--AS THE SOUL-SHATTERING VIBRATIONS **GROW** IN INTENSITY, SECOND BY SPLIT SECOND, UNTIL--

KA-THRAK-KOOM!

--THE RELOCATED DEVIANT CAPITAL IS **TORN APART** BY THE HAND OF ITS OWN MASTER-- AS SURELY AS ITS PREDECESSOR HAD BEEN SMASHED BY THE MASSIVE FIST OF **ESON THE CELESTIAL!**

THOUGH THE COMBINATION EARTHQUAKE AND EXPLOSION ARE DESIGNED TO BE SELF-CONTAINED, ITS REVERBERATIONS ARE FELT EVEN IN THE CITY **ABOVE**...

AN **EARTHQUAKE!?** BUT-- IT CAN'T BE-- NOT IN **NEW YORK!**

TELL THAT TO MY QUIVERIN' **KNEES**, SISTER!

UH OH! **NOW** WHAT?

THERE'S SOMETHING PUSHING ITS WAY UP--THRU THE **CONCRETE!** WH--?

FEAR NOT, MORTALS! THE SHOCK WAVES WILL CEASE, IN A FEW MOMENTS, WHEN--

IT'S THAT **THOR** GUY--THE ONE THEY SAY IS A REAL LIVE **THUNDER GOD!**

MAYBE HE AND HIS **BUDDIES** CAUSED THE QUAKE!

WE MUST MAKE THEM **UNDERSTAND,** THOR--!

NAY, ETERNAL. THERE BE *NO TIME* FOR THE NICETIES OF DEBATE.

THIS *THUNDER-STORM* SHALL SCATTER YON MORTALS...

...THOUGH IT DOTH GRIEVE ME *SORE* TO AFFRIGHT THEM FURTHER.

EVERYBODY HERE? *GOOD!*

IS IT? I SUSPECT THE *MILITIA* ARE ALREADY BEING SUMMONED.

FINE! I COULD USE A GOOD FIGHT.

OH, "SWEET PRINCE"--!

LET THOSE WHO *LEVITATE*, THEN, BRING THOSE WHO CANNOT.

DONE! THEN, YOU HAVE ALREADY ORDERED OUR SHIP TO TAKE OFF AND MEET US IN THE *SKY*, SERSI?

I HEAR LITTLE FROM *THENA*; I THINK SHE REALIZES HOW GREATLY SHE UNDERESTIMATED YOUR POWERS-- AND YOUR *BRAVERY*.

YONDER FLIES THY FLAGSHIP-- HIDDEN FROM YON MORTALS OF MIDGARD BY ENWRAPPING *CLOUDS!*

AND HOW ABOUT THIS FOR OUR *NEXT* MOVE, CREW:

IF WE CAN'T COUNT ON THE HUMANS *OR* THE DEVIANTS TO BACK US UP AGAINST THE CELESTIALS -- THEN WE'VE GOT TO TRUST TO OUR *FELLOW ETERNALS!*

WHAT SAY, IKARIS? THENA? *NEXT STOP-- OLYMPIA!?*

IT APPEARS WE'VE NO CHOICE IN THE MATTER.

OLYMPIA? DOST THOU MEAN *OLYMPUS*-- FAVORED REALM OF *ZEUS, HERCULES*, AND THOSE WHO ONCE WERE WORSHIPPED IN GREECE AND ROME?

IF SO, MINE *HAMMER* CAN TAKE US TO--

NO, THOR-- SHE MEANS *OLYMPIA*--

--MAIN HOMELAND OF THE ETERNALS--*OLYMPIA*, WHERE NOBLE *ZURAS* LORDS IT OVER ALL.

SET THY COURSE THEN *FOR* THIS OLYMPIA, MY FRIENDS!

THOR SHALL SET HIS FOOT AS FAR AS *ANY* MAN OR IMMORTAL--

HE ALONE IS SUFFICIENT, IN HIS GRIM MIGHT, TO *UNITE* ALL ETERNALS AGAINST THE SPACE GODS, IF NEED BE.

--AYE, E'EN THOUGH I SHOULD FIND MYSELF ARRAYED IN THE END 'GAINST GLEAMING *ASGARD ITSELF!!*

AND YOU JUST MIGHT, THUNDERER... YOU JUST MIGHT...!

NEXT ISSUE: **OLYMPIA!**

(PLUS A FEW MYTH-SHATTERING *SURPRISES*, TO BOOT!)

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THE MIGHTY

THOR

TM

ASSAULT ON OLYMPIA!

POLLARD/LAYTON

When DR. DONALD BLAKE strikes his wooden walking-stick upon the ground, it becomes the mystic hammer MJOLNIR— and the lame physician is transformed into the Norse God of Thunder, Master of the Storm, Lord of the Living Lightning— and heir to the throne of eternal Asgard....

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY THOR!®

ASSAULT ON OLYMPIA!

LET THE BIRDS OF THE AIR SCATTER, AND THE VERY CLOUDS DISPERSE-- FOR, THIS DAY, IT IS **THOR.** **GOD OF THUNDER**, WHO SOARS IN THEIR MIDST, PROPELLED BY HIS ENCHANTED HAMMER, **MJOLNIR**--!

STAND YOU READY, ETERNALS! HERE HE COMES!

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FOR SUGGESTIONS AND CONCEPTS
UTILIZED IN THIS AND NEAR FUTURE ISSUES

LG 482

IT'S ABOUT TIME! HE'S GOT A LOT OF *GALL*, ASKING US TO CIRCLE ABOUT UP HERE WHILE HE TOOK THAT *MORTAL WENCH* BACK TO SERSI'S APARTMENT.

AND WHEN IT COMES TO *GALL*, REJECT...

...I'M SURE YOU KNOW WHEREOF YOU *SPEAK!*

MINE APOLOGIES FOR THE UNSEEMLY DELAY, ETERNALS... AND MUTATES.

NO HARM DONE, ASGARDIAN.

EVEN THOUGH MARGO DAMIAN HAD BEEN THERE BEFORE, WE ALL AGREED THAT *OLYMPIA* IS NO PLACE FOR A *HUMAN.*

IF THE HUMANS ARE SO WEAK, THENA, WHY THE DEVIL DID YOU ETERNALS EVEN BOTHER TRYING TO FORM AN *ALLIANCE* WITH THEM? *

PHYSICAL PROWESS ISN'T *EVERYTHING*, REJECT...

*ETERNALS #16.--R.T.

BUT THEN, THAT'S SOMETHING YOU *WOULDN'T* KNOW ABOUT!

HA-HA-HA

I BEAT *YOU* ONCE, YOU OVER-GROWN CARROT--

--AND I'LL DO IT *AGAIN*, IF YOU--

HALT! THIS IS THE PERSONAL FLAGSHIP OF *FATHER ZURAS.*

I'LL NOT TOLERATE THIS BICKERING 'TWIXT *MUTATES!*

WHILE, UP FRONT...

...THEN, UNLIKE THE "*OLYMPUS*" OF THE GRAECO-ROMAN GODS, THIS "*OLYMPIA*" OF THE ETERNALS BE A PLACE WITH PHYSICAL EXISTENCE ON *THIS* PLANE!?

YES, THOR. BUT, BEFORE WE REACH IT, THERE'S SOMETHING I MUST KNOW.

YOU WERE AMONG THE *LAST* TO SEE MY FATHER *VIRAKO* ALIVE, WEREN'T YOU?

AYE, IKARIS... WHEN HE DID SACRIFICE HIM-SELF TO SAVE THE EARTH FROM THE MUTATE *WORLD-WORM.*

THIS MAY SOUND STRANGE, SINCE HIS DEATH OC-CURRED A THOUSAND YEARS AGO, BUT... DID HE SPEAK ANY *FINAL WORDS* YOU CAN RECALL?

HE'D NO NEED OF ANY, ETERNAL. 'TWAS HIS *ACTIONS* THAT DID SPEAK FOR HIM... AND THEY MOST *LOUDLY.*

THANKS. AS THE MORTALS SAY... I *NEEDED* THAT.

NOW, HANG ON TO YOUR *HELMETS*, KIDDIES.

NEXT STOP: OLYMPIA!

THEN, WHEN THE SHIP HAS BEEN PUT ON AUTO-MATIC PILOT...

I KNOW THIS IS A SLOW BOAT TO CHINA AS FAR AS YOU'RE CONCERNED, THUNDER GOD...WE'RE GOING SCARCELY *TWICE* THE SPEED OF SOUND, BUT...

OH, IKARIS-- WHEN ARE YOU GOING TO LET YOUR HAIR DOWN AND *RELAX* A LITTLE?

WE COULD HAVE A *PARTY* WHILE WE'RE ON OUR WAY TO EUROPE.

SERSI, WE'VE NOT FORGOTTEN THAT YOU HELPED *SAVE* US ALL FROM THE *DEVIANTS*,* BUT MUST YOU REALLY SNAP BACK INTO YOUR FRIVOLOUS SELF SO *TOTALLY*?

FRIVOLOUS!? WHAT'S SO SHALLOW ABOUT MERELY WANTING TO *CHEER THINGS* UP A BIT?

* LAST ISSUE. --ROY.

WH--?

NOW, YOU TAKE THAT TV-AND-WASHING-MACHINE CONSOLE THAT SISTER *THENA* WAS PLAYING WITH, FOR INSTANCE...

THERE! ISN'T IT MUCH NICER TO SEE THIS DREARY FLAGSHIP DECORATED WITH A FEW *POSIES*?

SERSI...!

BRING THE GYROTRONIC COORDINATOR *BACK*, WITCH, OR I'LL--

OH, ALL RIGHT-- BUT MY *ROSES* WERE FAR PRETTIER!

...EVEN IF THEY BE MERE ILLUSION.

BESIDES, YOU MUST ADMIT I'VE HELPED THE *TIME* PASS QUICKLY...

...AND NOW, HERE WE ARE IN *OLYMPIA* ALREADY!

NEXT MOMENT-- **WITHOUT WARNING**--!

BY THE POLAR WINDS!

THAT SHINY **GOLDEN DISC!** IT STRUCK THE SHIP-- SHATTERED THE RIGHT GRAV ROCKET! BUT-- WHAT IN THE NAME OF ALL THE CELESTIAL HOSTS **WAS** IT?

CRASH

CAN IT BE?? **FLYING SAUCERS**-- HERE IN **OLYMPIA!?**

NAY, 'TWAS NO "FLYING SAUCER"-- 'TWAS FAR TOO *SMALL* TO BE A CRAFT, SAVE FOR INSECTS!

WHAT-EVER IT WAS, ASGARDIAN--

--IT WAS BIG ENOUGH AND SOLID ENOUGH TO SEND OUR FLAGSHIP CAREENING TOWARD THE *MOUNTAINS* BEYOND OLYMPIA!

SHREEEE

BE THERE NO WAY TO *REGAIN* CONTROL OF THE CRAFT, IKARIS?

THERE'S *NO TIME!* WE'VE ONLY ONE COURSE OF ACTION:

ABANDON FLAGSHIP!

BE EACH ONE *SAFE* AND ACCOUNTED FOR?

YES. ALL ETERNALS CAN LEVITATE, TO SOME EXTENT.

THANKS FOR TAKING REJECT AND ME *WITH* YOU...

...AND NOT A MILLISECOND TOO *SOON*, EITHER!

KRASH!!

CURSE THE FATES! I HAD PROMISED FATHER ZURAS I WOULD RETURN HIS PERSONAL VESSEL IN ONE PIECE-- NOT IN MANY.

SURELY, THENA, THE TECHNOLOGY WHICH DID BUILD YONDER CITY BE CAPABLE OF CREATING *MANY* CRAFT SUCH AS THE ONE DEMOLISHED.

WE BE HERE ON A MISSION MORE *URGENT:* TO FIND A WAY TO MEET THE MENACE OF THE *SPACE GODS*, WHOM YE DO CALL THE *CELESTIALS*.

I NEED NO ONE TO TELL ME THAT, THUNDERER.

GOLDI-LOCKS MEANT NO HARM, THENA.

BUT, WHO-EVER ***ATTACKED*** US SURELY DID!

I THINK ***NOT,*** REJECT.

AH, I SEE NOW WHAT IKARIS MEANS: THE GOLDEN DISC CAME FROM THAT STADIUM-LIKE STRUCTURE OVER THERE-- THE ONE FROM WHICH A ***CHORUS OF SCREAMS*** SEEMS TO BE EMANATING.

THE YELLS ARE NOT UNLIKE THOSE HEARD WHEN I FACED REJECT IN THE DEVIANTS' ***ARENA OF COMBAT.***

YET, ALREADY, I DO SUSPECT YON SHOUTS BE OF A FAR ***DIFFERENT*** NATURE, MUTATE.

YOU'VE GUESSED IT, THEN, THOR...

WE HAVE COME, UNEXPEC-TEDLY, AT A MOMENT OF GREAT ***IMPORTANCE*** TO THE DENIZENS OF DIVINE OLYMPIA:

"THAT DAY OF DAYS WHEN THE ETERNALS ARE HOLDING THEIR OWN, ORIGINAL ***OLYMPICS!***"

MIGHTY ZURAS! BEHOLD SOME RETURNING PRODIGALS--

--AND AN ***UNINVITED GUEST*** OR TWO!

ALL WHO COME IN PEACE ARE WELCOME IN OLYMPIA WHEN THE ***GAMES*** ARE AFOOT, MAKKARI.

STILL YOU DID WELL TO BRING THEM TO MY ATTENTION WITH YOUR USUAL ***SPEED.***

HEAR ME, ETERNALS!
PLEASE, PRIME ONE--WE *MUSTN'T*--
ZURAS SPEAKS! EVERYONE LISTEN!
IKARIS, THENA, AND *SERSI* HAVE RETURNED, NOR HAVE THEY COME ALONE.
I WONDER WHOM THEY COULD BRING TO MATCH THEIR *OWN* SPLENDOR.

GREAT ZURAS, THIS IS *THOR,* GOD OF THUNDER.
HE HELPED US DESTROY THE *DEVIANTS'* NEW STRONGHOLD.
GOOD! BUT IF THIS GOLDHAIR IS TRULY THE SON OF ODIN--
--MY *SOURCES* TELL ME HE WAS *EXILED* FROM HIS GLEAMING HOMELAND.

AYE, MASTER OF OLYMPIA... THOUGH 'TWAS MOSTLY BY MINE *OWN* HAND. I--
UP, ASGARDIAN. YOU OWE ME NO EXPLANATION.
YOU ARE WELCOME HERE.

SIRE--THE *GAMES*--!
IN A MOMENT, DOMO.
YOU SEE, THOR, MAJOR DOMO'S JOB IS TO KEEP OLYMPUS RUNNING SMOOTHLY... AND ANY DELAY *UPSETS* HIM TERRIBLY.
I SEE... AND I'VE NO WISH TO INTERFERE.

THEN, DOMO, YOU MAY RECOMMENCE THE CONTESTS... AND THOR, WE'LL *TALK* LATER.
AS YOU WISH, ZURAS.
WELL! IT'S ABOUT *TIME!*
LET THE GAMES BEGIN ANEW!

HOW ABOUT IT, IKARIS? YOU *FLY* FAR TOO WELL FOR ANY OF US TO COMPETE WITH YOU, BUT HOW ABOUT YOUR ENTERING THE *DISCUS THROW*?
SO IT WAS A *STRAY DISCUS* THAT FELLED OUR CRAFT, WAS IT?
I'LL SAVE THAT INFORMATION TO *REGALE* THE PRIME ONE-- WHEN I RELATE PRECISELY WHAT HAPPENED TO HIS FAVORITE *FLAGSHIP.*
BUT NO, I THINK I'LL JUST *WATCH* TODAY.
'TIS PASSING *STRANGE,* THAT SUCH A RACE OF GODLIKE BEINGS COULD HAVE EXISTED SO *LONG* ON MIDGARD...
...AND YET ESCAPED, IT SEEMS, THE EYE OF BOTH *ODIN* AND MYSELF.

OR, MAYHAP, **NOT** SO STRANGE... FOR, DID NOT THE INCOMPARABLE **INHUMANS** OF THE HIMALAYAS LIKEWISE ELUDE E'EN OUR NOTICE FOR UNTOLD MILLENNIA?

THESE ETERNALS BE A **NOBLE** RACE, METHINKS...

BUT, 'TIS NOT FOR **THOR** TO JOIN IN THEIR NOISOME FROLICS.

ZURAS' WORDS-- BESPEAKING KNOWLEDGE OF EVENTS HE **SHOULD NOT** KNOW-- HAVE GREATLY FIRED MINE **IMPATIENCE** TO LEARN MORE.

YET, I SENSE THE CHIEF ETERNAL WILL BE HURRIED NO MORE THAN THE **ALL-FATHER** HIMSELF WOULD BE.

TO THINK OF **ASGARD** IS TO THINK OF MILADY **SIF**--SHE WHO HATH BEEN MY TRUE LOVE, PREDESTINED DOWN THE AGES.

MISS HER THOUGH I MAY, I DARE HOPE SHE DOTH NOT PINE **O'ERMUCH** FOR ME IN IMMORTAL ASGARD...!

NOT **EXACTLY**, THUNDER GOD. TO WIT:

WHAT A **DESOLATE** PLACE THIS IS TO WHICH ODIN HATH SENT ME!

STILL, WHAT **BETTER** SPOT BE THERE TO HIDE THAT WHICH I DO SEEK...

...THAN AMONG YONDER MOLDERING, MONUMENTAL **RUINS** OF A LONG-FALLEN RACE OF TITANS?

FALLEN WE MAY BE, ASGARDIAN WITCH--

--BUT WE SHALL **RISE** AGAIN, ONE DAY, TO MAKE OF **ASGARD** A FAR MORE DESOLATE PLACE THAN THIS!

A **STORM GIANT!**

ODIN DID NOT **TELL** ME THERE WOULD BE--

MAYHAP HE KNOWS NOT **EVERYTHING**, WENCH!

NOW-- PREPARE TO **PERISH!**

I WOULD HAVE PREFERRED **NOT** TO DO BATTLE WITH THEE, GIANT...

YET, I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN THAT 'THE **ENMITY** 'TWIXT THY KIND AND MINE BE **OLDER** AND **DEEPER** THAN E'EN THE GODS' OWN MEMORY.

ON GUARD!

THE NEXT INSTANT, HOWEVER, IT IS THE NAMELESS, TOWERING **STORM GIANT** WHOSE COLOSSAL AXE STRIKES THE FIRST MIGHTY BLOW--

--AND THE LADY **SIF** SUDDENLY FINDS HERSELF FIGHTING FOR HER IMMORTAL LIFE!*

*CLEARLY, IN THE CASE OF THE ASGARDIANS, "IMMORTAL" MEANS IMMUNITY FROM NATURAL DEATH, NOT FROM COMBAT. --RAGNAROKIN' ROY.

SHRAK!

WHILE, ON STILL **ANOTHER** WORLD WHICH IS TOO MUCH WITH US, LATE AND SOON...

FORSOOTH! IT BE OVERLY WARM HERE, FELLOW ASGARDIANS.

WOULD THAT THE ALL-FATHER HAD ENSCONCED US TO A MORE **TEMPERATE** CLIME!

THOU WOULDST BE COOLER, VOLSTAGG, IF THOU DIDST NOT CARRY AROUND SO MUCH **BLUBBER.**

ONLY ONE OF **VOLSTAGG'S** POWER COULD CARRY IT AT **ALL**, FRIEND FANDRAL.

KEEP YE **SILENT**, BOTH...

FOR, WE DO ENTER THAT SELFSAME **CAVERN** WHICH ODIN HATH DESCRIBED TO US.

I DO WISH IT HAD BEHOOVED OUR LORD TO INFORM US OF WHAT WE DO **SEEK** HERE.

IT MATTERS **LITTLE** WHAT YE SOUGHT, PUNY ONES! IT MATTERS ONLY WHAT YE HAVE INSTEAD **FOUND**--

--WHICH IS **DEATH!**

ZOUNDS! 'TIS THE DRAGON **FAFNIR!**

M- MAYHAP THIS BE THE **WRONG** CAVERN, THEN... SINCE 'TIS C-CLEARLY ALREADY **OCCUPIED!**

NAY, 'TIS THE VERY **CAVE** RIGHT ENOW! **FORWARD**, HOGUN!

I PRAY THEE, DO NOT **OUTSTRIP** ME, LEST--

LEST **WHAT**, GRIM ONE?

LEST **THIS**, THOU OFFAL OF ASGARD!

MMMFF!

WHOMP!

MOST WARFUL AND DESPICABLE OF *WORMS!*

I SHALL MAKE THEE WISH THOU HADST STAYED WHERE THOU HADST FALLEN *EONS* AGO, FAFNIR, IN THE ROCKY PITS 'NEATH THE LAND CALLED *NASTROND!** I--

HOGUN! BEWARE THOU HIS *FIERY BREATH!*

THOK!

UNNNH--!

THIS BE FAFNIR'S ABODE NOW-- AND YE THREE HAVE INVADED IT-- TO YOUR *SORROW!*

*BACK IN THOR #136.--ROY.

A-ACTUALLY, WE M-MERELY JOURNEYED HITHER TO PERFORM AN ERRAND FOR GREAT *ODIN.*

L-LET US COMPLETE IT IN PEACE-- AND WE'LL NOT *H-HARM* THEE...!

FOOL! IN MENTIONING THE NAME OF ODIN TO ME, THOU DIDST BUT SEAL THY *DOOM.*

'TWAS HE WHO DID *MAKE* ME WHAT I BE TODAY-- THIS LOATHSOME, LIZARD FORM--

AND I'LL HAVE MY *VENGEANCE,* BY USING IT TO DESTROY HIS THREE *LACKEYS!*

*BUT NOW, AS WE HIE US BACK TO AWE-SOME **OLYMPIA**...*

I'M GLAD YOU CHANGED YOUR MIND ABOUT COMPETING, IKARIS.

THERE'S NO OTHER ETERNAL AROUND WHO CAN GIVE ME A *GOOD FIGHT.*

I DO-- WHAT I *CAN,* ATLO. NOW TO--

WHAT IN THE NAME OF THE *UNI-MIND?*

A BLAST OF *SHEER ENERGY*-- HURLING US APART, AS IF WE WERE LEAVES CAUGHT IN THE GRIP OF A HURRICANE!

ZZAP!

BUT, *WHO* WOULD HAVE-- WHO *COULD* HAVE--?

YOU DO NOT KNOW ME, THEN -- BUT WHY ***SHOULD*** YOU, WHEN I'VE NOT BEEN PERMITTED TO WALK AMONG MY FELLOW ETERNALS FOR MANY AN AGE!

BUT, I WALK AMONG YOU ***TODAY***-- AND OLYMPIA SHALL ***TREMBLE*** TO MY HEAVY TREAD.

NEVER AGAIN AFTER THIS DAY SHALL I BE CALLED--***THE FORGOTTEN ONE!***

YOU!?

ZURAS! DID YOU ***HEAR?***

STRIKE, PRIME ONE! HE MEANS ***TROUBLE***, FROM THE SOUND OF HIM.

NO! HE LOOKS STRANGELY ***ALTERED*** NOW FROM WHAT HE WAS BEFORE-- AND I WOULD HEAR HIM OUT.

SPEAK, FORGOTTEN ONE!

THAT I ***WILL***, ZURAS... THOUGH YOU WON'T LIKE MY STORY.

YOU BANISHED ME, EONS AGO, TO THE LONELIEST DWELLING IN ALL OLYMPIA-- BECAUSE ***EARTH***, YOU SAID, HAD NO MORE NEED OF ***HEROES*** SUCH AS I HAD BEEN IN AGES PAST.

ONE THERE WAS, HOWEVER, WHO ***DISOBEYED*** YOUR UNKIND EDICT...

"...AND INDUCED ME TO ***END*** MY HOUSE ARREST... EVEN GAVE ME THIS ***METALLIC LOOK*** YOU SEE.

"...TO DESTROY A ***DEVIANT-SET BOMB*** WHICH HAD BEEN SECRETED THERE!

"...BUT ONLY AT A ***GRAVE COST*** TO MYSELF.

"THEN, INTO ***SPACE*** I WENT...TO THE GIANT MOTHERSHIP OF THOSE YOU CALL THE ***CELESTIALS***...

"I ACCOMPLISHED MY PERILOUS TASK...

"IT SEEMED I WOULD FLOAT THROUGH SPACE, EXCHANGING MY FORMER ALONENESS ONLY FOR EVEN LONELIER ***DEATH.***

"MY BODY, HOWEVER, FLOATED INTO THE NEARBY, GIGANTIC MOTHERSHIP OF THOSE WHO CALL THEMSELVES THE ***CELESTIALS***...

"AND OVER ME FELL THE LOOMING SHADOW OF THE ***ONE ABOVE ALL***... HE WHO COMMANDS THE FOURTH HOST.*

*SEE ETERNALS #13.--ROY.

"WHILE ***YOU***, ZURAS, DID NOT EVEN NOTICE I WAS GONE FROM OLYMPIA, HE RESTORED ME TO ***LIFE***... MADE ME FAR ***MIGHTIER*** EVEN THAN BEFORE.

"NO LONGER AM I TO BE CALLED THE ***FORGOTTEN ONE***-- FOR ***HE*** HAS NOT FORGOTTEN ME --

--BUT HAS SENT ME HERE AS HIS ***EMISSARY!***

TO WHAT PURPOSE, NAMELESS ETERNAL?

NAMELESS OR ETERNAL ***NO LONGER***, ZURAS!

I, WHO WAS ONCE THE ESSENCE OF SO MANY MYTHICAL HEROES ON EARTH, NOW HAVE BUT ***ONE*** NAME:

I AM-- HERO!

HERO?! A SORRY NAME FOR ONE WHO ***OPPOSES*** US!

WHY DON'T YOU ***SMASH*** HIM, SIRE, BEFORE HE CAN DO US MISCHIEF?

YOU KNOW ***PART*** OF THE REASON, DOMO.

MORE: I SHALL NOT STRIKE HIM DOWN, UNLESS HE COMMITS SOME ***HOSTILE ACT.***

AGAIN THEN-- *"HERO"*-- ***WHY*** HAVE YOU RETURNED TO OLYMPIA??

THE ***ONE ABOVE ALL*** SENT ME, TO DELIVER THIS MESSAGE TO ALL ETERNALS:

DO NOT ATTEMPT TO INTERFERE WITH THE ***FIFTY-YEAR JUDGMENT*** OF THE CELESTIALS-- ELSE, YOU'LL FACE FIRST ***MY*** WRATH, THEN ***THEIRS!***

I'VE NOT SAID I ***WOULD*** INTERFERE-- BUT NO MAN OR ETERNAL TELLS ***ZURAS*** WHAT TO DO-- NAY, NOT EVEN--

WE'LL SAVE YOU WASTING FURTHER BREATH ON THIS INGRATE, GREAT ZURAS-- BY TOSSING THIS SO-CALLED *"HERO"* BACK TO HIS NEW CELESTIAL MASTERS!

IKARIS, ALL OF YOU-- I ***WARN*** YOU--!

AND WHAT WILL YOU DO IF WE'LL ***NOT*** BE WARNED?

THEN I SHALL DO--

--THIS!

IN DAYS OF ELO, THE FORGOTTEN ONE TOPPLED THE PALACES OF BASE TYRANTS--SLEW THE BEASTS WHICH MEN COULD NOT CONQUER--CHANGED THE COURSE OF TUMULTUOUS RIVERS.

BUT NOW, REVIVIFIED BY THE AWE-INSPIRING SPACE GODS, THIS STRANGEST OF ETERNALS HAS BEEN REBORN EVEN STRONGER, MORE FEARSOME THAN IN THE AGE WHEN HE WALKED THE EARTH LIKE A DEMI-GOD...

AND, UNPREPARED FOR THE FULL, UNFETTERED FURY--THE SHEER, RELENTLESS POWER OF HIS ONSLAUGHT--EVEN IKARIS GOES DOWN, IF ONLY FOR A MOMENT!

THEN, AS THE AMAZED ONLOOKERS WATCH, WIDE-EYED...

THE ETERNALS WERE CREATED TO SERVE THE CELESTIALS... NOT TO STAND ASTRIDE THEIR PATH.

GIVE ME YOUR VOW, ZURAS... AND I WILL GO MY WAY!

REFUSE--AND I SHALL TOPPLE OLYMPIA LIKE A TRADESMAN'S CART!

PRIME ONE--GIVE THE OATH! WE ARE THE CELESTIALS' CREATION, AFTER ALL, AND--

I WILL DECIDE WHAT WE OWE THE SPACE GODS, DOMO. REMEMBER THAT!

Y-YES, PRIME ONE.

NEARBY, THE CLAMOR GOES NOT UNHEARD...

THEN, AS STARTLED ETERNALS LOOK ON IN HORROR...

...THE ONE CALLED "HERO" RUSHES TOWARD THE THICK PILLARS WHICH SUPPORT THE ARENA.

IKARIS! WHAT, I PRAY THEE--?

THAT ONE, ASGARDIAN--HE HAS COME TO CHALLENGE OLYMPIA ITSELF!

CHALLENGE, LEVITATOR!? NO--CONQUER!

ONCE, I WAS ONE OF YOU--BUT NO MORE!

NOW I AM HERO! HERO!

HERO? NAY--VILLAIN, RATHER--

WHRAM!

UHNN--!

--AND THOR, GOD OF THUNDER, KNOWS FULL WELL HOW TO DEAL WITH VILLAINS!

SEE TO HIM, SON OF ODIN. I MUST SAVE THE ARENA FROM TOTAL COLLAPSE!

THE ARENA ENTIRE!?

SURELY, ETERNAL, THAT BE BEYOND E'EN THY CONSIDERABLE CAPABILITIES.

BOTH YOU AND EVEN THE FORGOTTEN ONE MAY BE STRONGER THAN I, THOR-- BUT IF SO, IT IS THE VARIANCE BETWEEN TWO MIGHTY MASTODONS, NOT THAT BETWEEN A MAMMOTH AND A MINNOW!

WHAT ANY ETERNAL-- EVEN ONE TRANSMOGRIFIED BY THE CELESTIALS-- CAN DESTROY, IKARIS CAN RAISE AGAIN!

THERE! NOW WHAT SAY YOU OF MY PROWESS, SON OF ODIN?

THE THUNDERER, HOWEVER IS A WEE BIT PREOCCUPIED AT THE MOMENT...

HEAR ME, ASGARDIAN! I DO NOT LIKE CLOSING IN BATTLE WITH MY FORMER COMPANIONS.

YET, THEY ABANDONED ME-- EVEN CONFINED ME-- WHILE THE ONE ABOVE ALL RESTORED ME!

SKOK!

UNGH

ALL THAT I NOW AM, I OWE TO HIM, NOT TO FATHER ZURAS, WHO BANISHED ME FOR MY SUPPOSED PRIDE.

IN FACT, I REJOICE THE ETERNALS LEFT ME YOU TO FACE--

FOR, HOW MUCH EASIER FOR ME TO SMASH A SON OF ASGARD THAN TO CLASH ANEW WITH THOSE I HAVE KNOWN OF OLD.

I AM... HAPPY THOU ART THUS OBLIGED, "HERO"...

...THOUGH, IN SOOTH, I KNOW NOT *WHY* THOU WOULDST DESTROY OLYMPIA... OR WHY WE MUST FIGHT AT ALL!

GNARR

FRAP!

SPEAK! WHAT QUARREL HAST THOU WITH *OLYMPIA*, THAT I MUST DEFEND MINE HOSTS?

THEN, FROM NEARBY-- THE VOICE OF IKARIS:

HE COMES FROM THE *CELESTIALS*, THOR-- TO ORDER US TO NOT TO STAND IN THE WAY OF THE FIFTY-YEAR JUDGMENT, EVEN IF IT MEANS *EARTH'S END!*

AH! GLAD AM I THAT THOU HAST *TOLD* ME THIS, ETERNAL...

NOW, I'VE *NO QUALMS MORE* 'GAINST CRUSHING THIS ARROGANT, STRUTTING *BRAGGART!*

PHROAT!

BY THE FOURTH HOST! A MIGHTY BLOW, THAT!

I CAME TO LEVEL *OLYMPIA*, ASGARDIAN-- NOT YOU--

BUT, IF YOU OPPOSE ME, THEN I'LL *CRUSH* YOU--

--LIKE THE SHELL OF THE VERIEST *EGG!*

MY EYES... I CANNOT *SEE...!*

YET, IF THE GOD OF THUNDER IS MOMENTARILY BLINDED...

...THERE IS ONE, ORBITING HIGH ABOVE THE BLUE MARBLE KNOWN AS EARTH, WHO WITNESSES **ALL** THAT TRANSPIRES BELOW.

AND THAT ONE IS CALLED ONLY... THE **ONE ABOVE ALL!**

NOW, AS THE TRANSFORMED HERO **PUMMELS** ODIN'S SON WITH HAMMERLIKE BLOWS, THE TOWERING CELESTIAL REACHES OUT A MIGHTY HAND TO PRESS A SINGLE YARD-LONG STUD...

THEN--

PRIME ONE! BOTH THE ASGARDIAN AND THE FORGOTTEN ONE-- ARE **FADING FROM SIGHT!**

BUT-- **HOW?** AND, TO **WHERE??**

BUT ZURAS DOES NOT ANSWER... BECAUSE HE KNOWS THAT ANSWER ALL **TOO** WELL.

AS, IN THE SELFSAME MICROSECOND...

WHERE IN THE NAME OF **IDUNN'S APPLES--?**

WE ARE BACK ON BOARD THE *CELESTIALS' MOTHERSHIP*, THUNDER GOD.

BEHOLD!

FOR A LONG, LINGERING MOMENT, THOR LOOKS UP... AND **UP**...

...INTO THE DEEP, GLOOMY SHADOWS WHICH HIDE THE FACE AND UPPER FORM OF THE **ONE ABOVE ALL.**

AND HE KNOWS, IN THAT SILENCE-STRUCK INSTANT, THAT HIS **BATTLE** WITH THE FORGOTTEN ONE MUST GO ON, UNDER THE WATCHFUL GAZE OF THE CELESTIAL--

--TILL ONE OR THE OTHER HERO-- OR **BOTH**-- ARE DESTROYED--!

NEXT ISSUE: **THE BATTLE ABOVE THE STARS!**

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THE MIGHTY

THOR

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FURY OF THE FORGOTTEN HERO!

KP/BL

When DR. DONALD BLAKE strikes his wooden walking-stick upon the ground, it becomes the mystic hammer MJOLNIR— and the lame physician is transformed into the Norse God of Thunder, Master of the Storm, Lord of the Living Lightning— and heir to the throne of eternal Asgard....

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY THOR!®

FURY OF THE FORGOTTEN HERO!

BY THE HARROWING HORN OF HEIMDALL!

THEN, THIS TOWERING *TITAN* WHICH DOTH LOOM O'ER US BOTH--

YOU ASK *WHERE* WE ARE, THUNDER GOD?

WE ARE BACK ON BOARD THE *MOTHER-SHIP* OF THE *CELESTIALS*-- AND THERE IS HE WHO *TELEPORTED* US HERE!

AYE, ASGARDIAN...

LG511

ROY THOMAS * WRITER/EDITOR

KEITH POLLARD & CHIC STONE, ARTISTS

JOE ROSEN, LETTERER * GLYNIS WEIN, COLORIST

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...HE IS THE *MASTER* OF THE FOURTH HOST:

THE ONE ABOVE ALL!

MERE MOMENTS AGO, WE DID BATTLE IN THE ARENA OF *OLYMPIA* AMID THE MOUNTAINS OF THE PLANET EARTH...

NOW, WE STAND HUNDREDS OF MILES OUT IN THE SEA CALLED *SPACE*... WHERE THE PRIME CELESTIAL DESIRES THAT WE SHOULD *CONTINUE* OUR PITCHED COMBAT.

I SAY THEE *NAY*, THOU ONCE-ETERNAL WHO NOW DOTH CALL THYSELF ONLY "*HERO*"...

'TIS WITH YON MAMMOTH *SPACE GOD* THAT THOR MUST DEAL... NOT WITH THEE, WHO BE MERELY HIS *CREATION*.

THERE IS *LOGIC* IN WHAT YOU SAY, SON OF ODIN.

BUT THE ONE ABOVE ALL, ALAS, HAS NO WISH TO DEAL DIRECTLY WITH *YOU*.

THUS, IT BECOMES MY TASK TO *FINISH* AT ONCE WHAT I BEGAN SO FAR BELOW--

--IN THE DOMAIN OF *FATHER ZURAS* AND THE *ETERNALS*! *

=UNNHGN!=

THRAAM!

*LAST ISSUE. --ROY.

SURRENDER, GOLDMANE! THE UNPARALLELED MIND OF THE ONE ABOVE ALL INVADES MY VERY THOUGHTS--

--BIDS ME SPARE YOU, IF YOU WILL VOW NOT TO INTERFERE WITH THE CELESTIALS' COMING FIFTY-YEAR JUDGMENT.

NE'ER IN LIFE OR DEATH SHALL I UTTER SUCH A--

:ARRHH!:

RA

KU

YOU HAVE CHOSEN YOUR OWN FATE, THEN...

...AND THE FORGOTTEN ONE, WHO ROAMED THE EARTH WHEN THERE WERE HEROES IN THE LAND, HAS THE UNPLEASANT DUTY OF EXECUTING IT!

BE THY WITS FLED WITH THY LOYALTY?

THOU ART AN ETERNAL--

--MORE TIED TO MIDGARD'S* DESTINY THAN E'ER I HAVE BEEN, AS WELL AS TO THE DENIZENS OF OLYMPIA.

*MIDGARD=EARTH. --R.T.

THAT WAS ONLY TRUE TILL ZURAS BANISHED ME FOREVER FROM EARTH-- SAYING THE PLANET HAD NO MORE NEED OF HEROES.

THE ONE ABOVE ALL FREED ME FROM BONDAGE TO ZURAS' WILL...*

...AND IT IS HIS CAUSE I SERVE NOW.

THY REASONS-- MAKE MORE SENSE TO ME-- THAN THOU CANST KNOW--

*ETERNALS #13.--R.

--BUT STILL I AM THOR, MASTER OF THE STORM-- LORD OF THE LIVING LIGHTNING--

BLAM!

--AND I BEND THE KNEE TO NO MAN, ETERNAL, OR SPACE GOD!

YOU ARE ***STRONGER*** BY FAR THAN THE TITANS AND TYRANTS I FOUGHT IN THE DIM PAST, THOR.

YET, ONCE I DIVERTED ***GREAT RIVERS*** FROM AGE-OLD COURSES.

AND, THOUGH YOU MAY TRULY BE A "LORD OF LIGHTNING"--

--STILL, ***I*** CAN DIRECT THE POWERS OF THE VERY ***FIRMAMENT*** WHICH FLOW THROUGH THE METAL VEINS OF THIS GIGANTIC STARCRAFT--

--TURNING YOUR OWN ***LIFEFORCE*** AGAINST YOU!

ZZZTK

GODS OF ASGARD!

RRIPP

*FOR LONG SECONDS, THE ELECTROMAGNETIC FORCES HARNESSED BY THE VAST MOTHERSHIP **BOMBARD** ODIN'S OUTCAST SON...*

*...WHILE, THE **ONE ABOVE ALL** WATCHES, UNSPEAKING, UNMOVING.*

*YET, THE RESULT IS **NOT** AS OLYMPIA'S FORGOTTEN HERO COULD WISH...*

AS LONG AS MYSTIC ***MJOLNIR*** BE IN MINE HANDS, VILLAIN--

--***NO*** AMOUNT OF ELECTRICAL ENERGY CAN HARM ME.

ZZLAKT

THOU DOST BUT ***BATHE*** ME IN THAT WHICH LEAVES ME MOST ***REFRESHED!***

AND ***NOW***--!

*AND **NOW**, TO COMPLETE THE THUNDER GOD'S INTERRUPTED SENTENCE, **ASGARDIAN** AND **FORMER ETERNAL** MEET HEAD-ON...*

*...SINEW AGAINST SINEW, **FORCE** AGAINST SHEER, NAKED **FORCE**...*

*...AND EVEN THE CELESTIALS' **MOTHERSHIP** TREMBLES WITH THE AWESOME POWER OF THAT PRIMORDIAL CLASH!*

WHILE, IN DISTANT ASGARD:

LIKEST THOU THE SCENE I HAVE SHOWN TO THEE, LORD ODIN...

...THAT LIVING PORTRAIT OF THINE ONLY ***BLOODSON***, FIGHTING FOR HIS VERY LIFE 'GAINST THE MINION OF THE ***CELESTIALS?***

THOU KNOWEST WELL HOW IT DID REND MINE HEART, SPITEFUL MIMIR.

FOR, THOUGH THOR BE BANISHED FROM ASGARD FOR GOOD REASONS, STILL ***HIS*** PAIN BE TRULY ***MY*** PAIN.

WHY DIDST THOU NOT ***TELL*** THE THUNDER GOD THOSE REASONS, PRAY?

THOU DOST TAUNT ME, O FIERY AND HATED WELL OF WISDOM... FOR THOU KNOWEST I ***CANNOT.***

TRULY THE SINS OF MINE OWN RELATIVE ***YOUTH*** DO RETURN TO PLAGUE ME NOW, AFTER SO LONG A TIME.

IF SO, THEY BE NOT ***ALL*** THAT HAVE RETURNED FOR THAT PURPOSE!

EH?

KARNILLA, THOU QUEEN OF THE NORNS!

THOU HAST RETURNED, THEN, FROM SPINNING THY ***WEBS OF FATE?***

AYE, RETURNED IN ***SORROW*** AND IN HOLY ***ANGER...***

FOR, WORD HATH REACHED ME THAT ***THOU***, MOST LOATHSOME OF MEN AND GODS, HAST DONE THE ONE DEED THAT MIGHT BRING THEE INTO IRRECONCILABLE ***CONFLICT*** WITH KARNILLA!

THOU ***KNOWEST*** FULL WELL WHAT I MEAN!

THINE HARSH WORDS DO ***GRIEVE*** ME AS MUCH AS REMIND ME, NORN-QUEEN...

YET, THOUGH I DID TRULY ALLOW THY BELOVED ***BALDER THE BRAVE*** TO BE SACRIFICED, THAT I MIGHT STAVE OFF THE ***TRUE RAGNAROK...***

...KNOW THEE THAT THOU DOST LOVE HIM ***NO MORE*** THAN I!

BASE LIAR!

IF THOU KNOWEST AUGHT, KARNILLA, THOU KNOWEST THAT BALDER BE NOT TRULY DEAD -- BUT IN THAT *TWILIGHT STATE* 'TWIXT LIFE AND DEATH WHERE HE MAY STAY FOR ALL ETERNITY, LEST ASGARD ITSELF FALL.

THEN *LET* IT TOPPLE HEADLONG! WHAT CARE *I*?

SPEAK NOT TO ME OF DANGER TO *THOR* -- FOR, THAT BE NOT *THY* DOING, AS WAS BALDER'S RUIN.

MAYHAP... NOT.

YET, LOOK THEE HOW, TO SAVE ASGARD, I HAVE SENT *OTHERS* WHOM I LOVE BUT LITTLE LESS THAN BALDER INTO WORLDS FRAUGHT WITH PERIL!

THE LADY *SIF* -- BATTLING A *STORM GIANT* ALONE!?

AYE, ON A FAR-OFF WORLD! AND, THOUGH SHE BE NOT *UNSKILLED* WITH A BLADE --

"STILL, SHE BE ARRAYED THIS TIME 'GAINST ONE LIKE UNTO A *MOUNTAIN!*

LIE DOWN AND *DIE*, ASGARDIAN GNAT!

THY SWORD CANNOT STAND LONG BEFORE *SKOLL'S* SUN-SLAYING AXE!

KLANGG

OUR WEAPONS ARE *EQUALS* IN ALL BUT SIZE, GIANT...

YET, EVEN A LOWLY *GNAT* MAY STING A CLUMSY *BEHEMOTH!*

OHH

'TWILL TAKE *MANY* BLOWS LIKE THAT TO LAY *ME* LOW, WENCH.

SKATCH!

I NEED NOT *MAKE* THOSE MANY BLOWS --

--NOT WHEN THE *ALL-FATHER* HATH GIVEN ME SOME SLIGHT FRAGMENT OF HIS OWN DIVINE *ODINFORCE.*

HE BADE ME *SAVE* IT FOR JUST SUCH A MOMENT AS THIS, AND THEN TO DIRECT IT THROUGH MY *SWORD*--

--THUS!

ZAP!

ARRRH

SKOLL SHALL *SLEEP* LONG-- AND I HOPE THAT HE HATH NOT DAMAGED THAT WHICH I DO SEEK IN YONDER CAVE.

HAH! MY WORDS DO *MOCK* ME, EVEN AS I UTTER THEM.

FOR, THAT WHICH I DID SEARCH FOR, BY MILORD ODIN'S COMMAND, IS THAT WHICH *DESTROYETH ALL*--

--YET ITSELF MAY *NE'ER BE DESTROYED!*

"I...THINK THOU HAST SEEN *ENOW,* KARNILLA...

...ENOW TO SHOW THEE I WOULD SACRIFICE *ALL*, E'EN MINE OWN SON OR THE BELOVED DAUGHTER OF HEIMDALL, FOR THE SAKE OF THE *GLEAMING REALM.*

I NOTICE *THOU* STAYEST SAFE AT HOME, MILORD.

WORD ALSO REACHED ME, THROUGH THE ETHER, OF THOSE COMRADES CALLED THE *WARRIORS THREE.*

THOU DOST KNOW *MUCH,* NORN-QUEEN.

AYE, I HAVE SENT *THEM,* LIKEWISE, TO A DESOLATE AND DANGER-FILLED LAND...ON A MISSION AT WHICH E'EN THOU CANST ONLY GUESS.

AH, 'TIS *FAFNIR,* IS'T NOT...

BUT THEY, IT SEEMS, FARE *LESS WELL* THAN THOR'S ONCE-BETROTHED.

"...FAFNIR, THE *SECOND* TO BEAR THAT NAME:

"*NOT* THE GOLD-GUARDING STORM-GIANT OF LEGEND, BUT THE *KING* NAMED AFTER THAT GIANT, WHOM THOU DIDST TURN LIKE-WISE INTO A DRAGON IN A MOMENT OF RARE GOOD HUMOR.*

"IN ANY EVENT, E'EN *THIS* FAFNIR DOTH LOOK MIGHTY ENOW TO SLAY *HOGUN, FANDRAL,* AND O'ERWEIGHT *VOLSTAGG*...

BY MINE OWN IMMORTAL *GIRTH!*

WAK!

THE MAN-DRAGON'S BELLY BE AS FIRM AS DWARF-FORGED *STEEL!*

* *THOR* #134-135. --ROY.

MAYHAP HIS *GUTS* BE HARD AS METAL, VOLUMINOUS ONE--

--BUT NOT HIS EVIL *EYE!*

OWRR

"*SKILLFUL,* THAT FANDRAL...

"...THOUGH E'EN A *HALF-BLINDED* MONSTER MAY STILL DEAL DEATH-- CAN HE *NOT,* LORD ODIN?

"NOW, THOU AND THY TORMENTED FAFNIR SHARE *TWO EYES* 'TWEEN YE.

"PERHAPS YE TWO SHOULD BE *ALLIES* NOW, RATHER THAN THY SENDING *FOES* 'GAINST HIM FOR SOME UN-GLIMPSED REASON OF THINE OWN.

"OR, PERHAPS IT BE ALREADY *TOO LATE* FOR THAT!

FANDRAL! THY SCHEME-- HATH BACKFIRED.

AYE, W-WE BE *WEAPON-LESS* NOW.

FORGIVE ME, MY FRIENDS-- WHEN WE DO MEET AGAIN-- IN *VALHALLA.*

FOR THE BODY OF AN ASGARD-IAN TO BE TRANSMIGRATED TO VALHALLA, FOOLS, THERE MUST *BE* A BODY.

OF YOURS, *NAUGHT* SHALL RE-MAIN, FOR ODIN *OR* FOR HELA--

--WHEN THE *FIERY BREATH OF FAFNIR* HATH REDUCED YE ALL TO FORMLESS, SCATTERED *ASHES!*

"CRIMSON FLAMES *FILL* THY OMNISCREEN NOW, MILORD ODIN...

...*OBSCURING* THE FORMS OF THY DOOMED WARRIORS THREE.

SHALL I TUNE IT MORE *FINELY,* THAT THOU MAYEST BEHOLD THEIR END?

NAY! LET THE IMAGE *FADE!*

THOU ART *CRUEL* BEYOND ALL MEASURE, WOMAN.

THINKEST THOU I DID *DESIRE* THAT THEY OR THE LADY SIF OR THY BE-LOVED BALDER SHOULD PERISH?

THINE *ACTS* DO DROWN THY SIMPERING *WORDS,* ACCURSED OF ASGARD.

NOW, WILT THOU *RESTORE* BALDER TO LIFE AND TO ME?

I... *CANNOT,* NORN-QUEEN, MUCH AS I WOULD WISH TO.

ON HIS UNFEELING SHOULDERS DOTH THE *FATE OF ASGARD* HINGE... AYE, AND *MORE.*

ENOUGH WEASLING WORDS! I'LL HAVE BALDER LIVING, OR I'LL HAVE *REVENGE.*

MUST I RAISE *MANGOG* OR THE HOUNDING HORDES OF *HELA* TO MAKE THEE DO MY BIDDING?

BY THE FIRES OF *MUSPELLSHEIM* DO I SWEAR THAT--

BEWARE, NORN! THOUGH THOU MAYEST INDEED SPIN THE FATES OF MEN AND IMMORTALS ON THINE INFERNAL LOOM, SEEK NOT TO THREATEN THE *LORD OF ASGARD!*

GO ON, LORD ODIN-- SMITE HER! *DESTROY* HER, IF THOU CANST!

LET ALL THE COSMOS SEE HOW *BRAVE* THOU ART, TO ANNIHILATE A GODDESS AS OLD E'EN AS *THYSELF!*

AYE, DESTROY ME IF THOU ART *ABLE*--OR ELSE I'LL FIGHT THEE TILL *BOTH* THINE EYES BE GONE!

NAY, I'LL *NOT* FIGHT THEE, KARNILLA... NOT NOW...

41

FOR, THERE BE NO *PROFIT* IN IT, AND I HAVE BUSINESS ELSEWHERE, *ELSEWHEN.*

FARE YE *WELL*, BOTH MY WELL-WISHERS!

BY THE *GINNUNGA-GAP*, FROM WHICH ALL THINGS DID SPRING!

HE IS *GONE*, THE BASE COWARD!

BE NOT *DECEIVED* BY THINE OWN HATRED, DEAR KARNILLA...

ODIN BE MANY THINGS, MORE E'EN THAN *THOU* CANST KNOW... BUT HE BE *NO COWARD.*

IF THOU DOST KNOW SO MUCH, MIMIR, THEN TELL ME WHAT DIRE *SECRET* HE HINTED AT SO DARKLY.

AH, IF I SHOULD TELL THEE, NORN-QUEEN, THEN 'TWOULD BUT THAT MUCH DIMINISH THE *PLEASURE* I SHALL TAKE IN SEEING HIM *FAIL.*

THOU ART SURE, THEN, HE *WILL* FAIL?

DOST THOU ASK THAT OF *MIMIR*, TO WHOM THE FUTURE BE AS AN *OPEN SCROLL?*

THEN I SHALL TAKE NO OTHER ACTION, FOR THE MOMENT.

PERHAPS, WHEN ODIN BE SUFFICIENTLY HUMBLED, *THEN* BALDER CAN BE RESTORED TO FULL LIFE ... AT KARNILLA'S SIDE.

WHILE, BACK IN OUTER SPACE IN *THIS* DIMENSION--

WILT *THOU* NOW SURRENDER, ETERNAL?

ETERNAL *NO LONGER*, AS I HAVE TOLD YOU BEFORE!

I AM *HERO* NOW, DO YOU HEAR ME?

HERO-- UNDYING ESSENCE OF *ALL* HEROES!

UNNNH-!

SLAMM!

I TRIED TO *SPARE* YOU, ASGARDIAN, BUT YOU WOULDN'T *LET* ME.

NOW, SINCE I REALIZE YOU ARE AT LEAST MY *EQUAL* IN POWER--

--I DARE GIVE YOU *NO MORE* CHANCES!

RRIP

ONCE I DID HOLD THE VERY *EARTH* THUS ALOFT, AND MEN THOUGHT ME *ATLAS*, ONE OF THE PRIMORDIAL TITANS.

THIS DAY, I SHALL PROVE THAT PERHAPS THEY WERE *RIGHT*, AFTER ALL!

BLOOP!

NO *MIGHTIER* FOE HAVE I FOUGHT, FORGOTTEN ONE-- WHETHER ABOVE, ON, OR UNDER THE EARTH--

--BUT STILL AM I *THOR!*

THOR!!

SHROK!

AND WHAT *THOU* CANST SEND HURTLING AT ME--

--*I*, IN TURN, MAY HURL AGAINST THE ALLEGED *ONE ABOVE ALL!*

CAN YOU, OUTCAST SON OF ODIN?

*NOT WHEN, WITH A SINGLE WITHERING GLANCE, THE PRIME CELESTIAL CAN **MELT** THAT MAMMOTH, GYROSCOPIC GLOBE--*

*--TILL IT IS NO MORE THAN AN INFINITESIMAL **MOTE**--*

*--SCARCELY LARGE ENOUGH TO FILL THE EYE OF A **FLEA**, LET ALONE OF A SPACE GOD.*

*NOR HAS THE FORGOTTEN ONE'S **AWE** OF YOUR FEAT WEAKENED HIS SINEWS...*

YOUR STRENGTH SEEMS MOSTLY IN YOUR *HAMMER*, THUNDERER...

...EVEN AS *MINE* WAS RUMORED ONCE TO BE ALL IN MY LONG, FLOWING *TRESSES.*

FROK!

THE FORMER LEGEND, AT LEAST, WAS *TRUE!* EVEN *MY* STRENGTH-- CANNOT LIFT-- THE HAMMER!

BUT, PERHAPS IF I CAN KEEP *YOU* FROM WIELDING IT, *THAT* WILL--

'TIS NOT *THY* DESTINY TO KNOW THE TRUTH OF THAT, "*HERO*"--

--NOT WHILST THOR HATH STILL *TWO FISTS* TO STRIKE HOME FOR HIM, HAMMER OR NO!

MUST *HURRY*--ERE MY BRAVADO DOTH TURN TO WORMWOOD IN MY MOUTH.

IF I BE BEREFT OF MINE HAMMER FOR *SIXTY SECONDS* ON THE MIDGARD-PLANE,* I REVERT TO THE LAME *DR. DONALD BLAKE*--

THA-M!

*MIDGARD=EARTH.--*REPETITIOUS ROY.*

AND HE COULD NOT STAND FOR A SINGLE *INSTANT* 'GAINST THIS SCION OF OLYMPIA!

UNNGN

SOKK!

AH! AT LAST THOU DOST *REEL*, ETERNAL.

THEN, LET THE WORD BE *TRUMPETED* THROUGH THE KNOWN AND UNKNOWN UNIVERSES-- THROUGHOUT EVERY COSMOS THERE BE, FROM HERE TO THE FARTHEST STAR AND E'EN BEYOND:

THOR BE THE MOST FORMIDABLE WARRIOR OF ALL, AS DOTH BEFIT THE SON OF--

BLAMM!!

*BUT, THE WORD **FREEZES** IN THE THUNDER GOD'S MOUTH.*

*THOR HAS VOWED NEVER TO SPEAK OF OR SWEAR BY ALL-FATHER **ODIN** WHILE HE IS EXILED FROM ASGARD FOR REFUSING TO RENOUNCE HIS ALLEGIANCE TO EARTH.*

STILL, THE BREATHING BUT OTHERWISE MOTIONLESS FORM OF THE FORGOTTEN ONE SPEAKS WORLDS.

ONE ABOVE ALL, IF THAT BE THE NAME THOU DOST ANSWER TO--

'TWAS *THY* FIGHT YON VALIANT ETERNAL DID FIGHT, NOT HIS OWN.

NOW *SPEAK*, IF SPEAK THOU CANST-- AND TELL ME HOW I MAY *HALT* THY STAR-SPAWNED RACE'S FIFTY-YEAR JUDGMENT OF MIDGARD!

SPEAK, OR FACE THE POWER OF *THOR*-- THE MIGHT OF *MJOLNIR!*

SPEAK!

AS, BACK IN *OLYMPIA*:

OUR FELLOW ETERNALS GROW *RESTLESS*, FATHER.

I TELL YOU, WE CAN DELAY NO LONGER. WE MUST ACT! *WE MUST STRIKE!*

STRONG WORDS, THENA, MY DAUGHTER. AND WHAT SAY *YOU*, IKARIS?

WE GAVE OUR WORD TO THE *ASGARDIAN*, ZURAS.

IS THE OATH OF THE *MASTER OF OLYMPIA* WRITTEN ON THE BREEZES THAT BLOW?

WE VOWED ONLY TO *DELAY* ACTION... THAT IS ALL.

TRUE, FATHER! AND EVERY MOMENT WE DELAY, WE'VE LESS HOPE OF PROTECTING OURSELVES FROM-- FROM--

FROM *WHAT*, THENA?

IF *YOU* ARE PRIVY TO THE SECRET AIMS OF THE CELESTIALS--

--PLEASE *TELL* US, SO THAT WE MAY SHARE YOUR KNOW-LEDGE.

AS FOR ME, I SHALL ABIDE BY THE DECISION OF *ZURAS*, WHATEVER IT MAY BE.

HEAR ME, THEN! I RULE THAT WE HAVE *FULFILLED* OUR VOW TO THOR, GOD OF THUNDER.

WE ARE FREE NOW TO ACT ON OUR *OWN*, AS IS FITTING FOR ETERNALS BORN.

AND WHAT ACTION IS THAT TO *BE*, FATHER?

ONCE BEFORE, MY CHILDREN, WE *PROBED* THE SPACE GODS' CRAFT IN OUR *ORGANIC FORM*-- BUT TOOK NO HOSTILE ACTION.

THIS TIME, WE SHALL *USE* ALL THAT POWER, IF NEED BE, TO *LASH OUT.*

PREPARE FOR THE RITUAL OF THE UNI-MIND!

AND, EVEN AS ZURAS MAKES THAT STARTLING PRONOUNCEMENT--

SO, THOU WILT *NOT* DEIGN TO SPEAK TO ME OF THINE OWN ACCORD...

...BUT WISH ONLY TO *SCOOP ME UP*, AS I BEHELD THY FELLOW DO UNTO AN AIRLINER.

WELL, SPACE GOD THOUGH THOU BE, THOU HAST MUCH TO *LEARN*--

KRAKKL

--ABOUT THE *GOD OF THUNDER!*

YET, ERE WE DO BATTLE-- IF BATTLE WE MUST-- I WOULD BEHOLD THE *FACE* OF HIM WHO OPPOSES ME.

AND *LIGHTNING* HATH OTHER REACHES THAN MERE *DESTRUCTION.*

IT MAY ALSO BE USED TO *ILLUMINATE* THE DARK PLACES-- *THUS!*

BUT, AS THE HAMMER-DIRECTED BEAM STRIKES THE GRIM BLACKNESS WHICH ENSHROUDS THE TOWERING FIGURE...

BY IDUNN'S GOLDEN APPLES! THE SHADOWS DO SWALLOW THE LIGHT, LIKE UNTO A *BLACK HOLE!*

THESE CELESTIALS DO BEND E'EN *TIME* AND *SPACE* TO THEIR WHIMS, IT SEEMS.

NOR IS BASE **MATTER** EXEMPTED FROM THEIR AWESOME POWER--

--AS THE SON OF ODIN LEARNS, A MOMENT LATER--

--WHEN UNNUMBERED TONS OF DELICATE YET MASSIVE **APPARATUS** COMES HURTLING DOWN UPON HIS COSTUMED FORM!

FROOM!

THOU ART **NOT** ABOVE THE PHYSICAL, THEN--

--OR EVEN, PERHAPS, LOSING THY **TEMPER**-- AND SMASHING INSTRUMENTS OF USE TO THEE.

STILL, I'VE NO DESIRE NOW FOR AUGHT BUT **KNOWLEDGE!** TELL ME OF--

BY ALL THE COLORS OF BIFROST!

THE CELESTIAL'S **FOOT**--!

FROM SUCH STRIDES, MAYHAP SOME OF THE TALES OF **SEVEN-LEAGUE BOOTS** WERE BORN.

YET, **THOR** HIMSELF HATH GIVEN BIRTH TO LEGENDS, IN HIS DAY--

WHOMP!

--AND I HAVE BEEN **MOCKED** LONG ENOW!

ON THY GUARD, MONSTER FROM THE OUTER DARK!

WHAT!? DO MINE IMMORTAL EYES DECEIVE ME?

THLAP!

MJOLNIR DOTH *RICOCHET* FROM YON SHADOWY SHIELD ABOUT THE SPACE GOD'S HEAD!

I SHOULD HAVE *SUSPECTED* 'TWOULD HAPPEN.

FOR, DID NOT MY MYSTIC MALLET LIKE-WISE RECOIL FROM THE GREAT SHINING *DOME* ABOUT THE CELESTIALS' CITY AMID THE SKY-JUTTING *ANDES*?*

I BE *TRAPPED* HERE, THEN, WITH NO WAY OF ESCAPE!

*IT SURE DID -- IN ISSUE #283. -- R.T.

YET, IF THOU DOST MEAN TO *SLAY* ME HERE AMONGST THINE ADAMANTINE SILENCE, MOUNTAINOUS ONE--

--KNOW THOU THAT THIS *SON OF ASGARD* SHALL GO DOWN AMID THE FIERCE AND FURIOUS *BLAZE OF BATTLE!*

ANGERED AND FRUSTRATED BEYOND ALL ENDURANCE, THE THUNDER GOD HURLS HIMSELF UPWARD AT THE *ONE ABOVE ALL*--

*--ONLY TO FIND THAT EVEN THE GRIM SOLACE OF **DEATH BY COMBAT** IS TO BE DENIED HIM!*

WAP!

MMMFF!

TRULY, THIS BE *MADNESS* BEYOND COMPARE-- TO BE *SWATTED ASIDE,* LIKE UNTO AN INSECT--

--I, WHO HAVE WITH-STOOD ALL THE RAMPAGING HORDES OF *RAGNAROK!*

YET, WHILST EARTH STANDS *THREATENED* BY THINE ILK, I'LL *NOT* FALL--UNLESS IT BE IN *DEATH!*

NAY, NOT IF *ASGARD ITSELF* WERE ARRAYED AGAINST ME WOULD I ABANDON MINE *ADOPTED WORLD* TO--

THE NEXT SECOND, THE THUNDER GOD IS STRUCK SUDDENLY SILENT--

--AS THE ONE ABOVE ALL STRETCHES OUT A GIGANTIC, GLOWING HAND:

EH? BE THIS SOME *NEW* ATTACK-- SOME ADDED *TRICKERY?*

NAY! HOLD! HIS STRANGE PALM DOTH CAUSE AN *IMAGE* TO BEGIN TO FORM IN THE AIR BEFORE ME--

--AN IMAGE MOST FOUL!

'TIS OF *ALL-FATHER ODIN*, AMID THOSE SELFSAME *ETERNALS* I DID ENCOUNTER A THOUSAND YEARS AGONE, JUST BEFORE THE COMING OF THE SPACE GODS' *THIRD HOST!**

AND-- MY SIRE DOTH *BEND THE KNEE* BEFORE THE ONE CALLED *ARISHEM*-- LEADER OF THE CELESTIALS ON EARTH!

IF THIS IMAGE BE TRUTH, THEN I NOW DO KNOW *WHY* ODIN FORBADE ME TO INTERFERE WITH THEIR *FIFTY-YEAR JUDGMENT:*

HE IS *IN LEAGUE* WITH THEM-- OR ELSE THEIR BASEST *SLAVE!*

NAY! 'TIS A LIE! *IT MUST BE A LIE!!*

*YET, EVEN AS HE SPEAKS-- THOR KNOWS, SOMEHOW, THE IMAGE DOES **NOT** LIE...!*

* THOR ANNUAL #7. --ROY.

NEXT **LOOK HOMEWARD, ASGARDIAN!**

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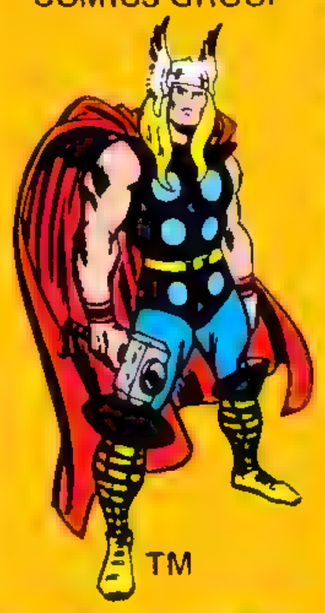

TM

THE MIGHTY

THOR

®

BY ALL THE HORDES OF HELA!

I DARE NOT HARM THE RAMPAGING *DESTROYER*--

LEST I SLAY THE *GODDESS* I LOVE!!

When DR. DONALD BLAKE strikes his wooden walking-stick upon the ground, it becomes the mystic hammer MJOLNIR— and the lame physician is transformed into the Norse God of Thunder, Master of the Storm, Lord of the Living Lightning— and heir to the throne of eternal Asgard....

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY THOR!®

ROY THOMAS WRITER/EDITOR * KEITH POLLARD & CHIC STONE ILLUSTRATORS * JOE ROSEN, LETTERER B. SHAREN, COLORIST * JIM SHOOTER CONSULTING EDITOR

IN THE STARSHIP OF THE **CELESTIALS**, WHICH CIRCLES AN UNSUSPECTING EARTH, THE GIGANTIC SPACE GOD CALLED THE **ONE ABOVE ALL** HAS JUST CONJURED UP AN UNNERVING, STARTLING **VISION** FOR THE GOD OF THUNDER...

NAY! 'TIS A LIE! IT **MUST BE** A LIE!

ALL-FATHER ODIN WOULD ***NE'ER*** HAVE BOWED IN ABJECT OBEDIENCE TO THY FELLOW CELESTIALS, AS THINE IMAGE DOTH PORTRAY!

THIS BE ***TRICKERY MOST FOUL!***

YET, EVEN AS HE RAILS THUS, THOR KNOWS SOMEHOW THE IMAGE DOES **NOT** LIE...!

LOOK HOMEWARD, ASGARDIAN!

LG541

NOR DOES THE TOWERING ALIEN DEIGN EVEN TO **ANSWER** THE SON OF ODIN'S ANGUISHED CRY OF OUTRAGE...

THREE TIMES BEFORE HAVE YE SPACE GODS VISITED THAT WORLD MY RACE DOTH CALL **MIDGARD**, ITS DENIZENS THE **EARTH.**

AND, THIS **FOURTH** TIME, YE HAVE VOWED TO PRONOUNCE A **FINAL JUDGMENT** UPON IT, IN LESS THAN HALF A CENTURY.

WELL, HEAR ME NOW: E'EN IF THY KIND DID MAKE SOME **UNHOLY BARGAIN** WITH MY SIRE IN EONS PAST--

--YE HAVE MADE NO PACT WITH **THOR!**

OUTCAST OF ASGARD THOUGH I BE, STILL I'LL FIGHT THEE **ALONE** IF NEED BE-- AYE, THEE AND ALL THINE IGNOMINIOUS **ILK!**

FOR, HAST THOU NOT SENT AGAINST ME THE FORGOTTEN **ETERNAL** THOU DID REFASHION INTO THE ONE CALLED "**HERO**"--

--AND DID I NOT DEFEAT E'EN **HIM,** IN PITCHED BATTLE?

E'EN SO SHALL I RENEW MY DEATH-STRUGGLE WITH **THEE,** UNLESS THOU DOST ANSWER ME AT ONCE:

BE MY FATHER **IN LEAGUE** WITH YE CELESTIALS-- AGREEING FOR SOME UNKNOWN REASON TO **STAND ASIDE** WHILST YE PASS JUDGMENT ON MIDGARD?

OR BE HE, WORSE YET-- THY BASEST **SLAVE??**

ANSWER ME!

BUT THE ONLY REPLY IS **SILENCE...**

...A SILENCE WHICH GOADS THE THUNDER GOD INTO SUDDEN **ACTION!**

LET THOR BE SLAIN THIS DAY, THEN, OR ELSE THE **ONE ABOVE ALL!**

AS THE GODS ARE MY WITNESS, THERE BE **NO OTHER WAY!**

WHAT--? THE CELESTIAL HATH THROWN UP A **FORCE FIELD** ABOUT HIMSELF.

WILL I BREAK THROUGH IT THIS TIME, AND **SMITE** HIM--

--OR BE **DESTROYED** BY IT??

BUT, THE **CORRECT** ANSWER, IF THE ASGARDIAN WERE TAKING A POP QUIZ--

--WOULD BE "NONE OF THE ABOVE."

BY HEIMDALL'S HORN!

I DID HURL MYSELF AT A CELESTIAL IN *SPACE*-- AND HAVE FINISHED MY HEADLONG LEAP IN *OLYMPIA*, HOME OF THE ETERNALS!*

TO *YOUR* SURPRISE, SON OF ODIN... NOT THAT OF *ZURAS*.

LITTLE DO YOU KNOW YET OF THE POWER OF THE *SPACE GODS* WHO MADE MAN, ETERNALS, AND DEVIANTS.

*WHICH WAS HIS AND HERO'S STARTING POINT A COUPLE OF ISSUES BACK, REMEMBER? --*REMINISCIN' ROY.*

WELCOME BACK TO OLYMPIA, THOR. I'M GLAD YOU WEREN'T *HARMED* WHEN THE ONE ABOVE ALL YANKED YOU OUT OF OUR MIDST.

HARM!? WHAT CANST E'EN THOU KNOW, IKARIS, OF THE HARM WHICH CAN BE DONE TO THE PRIDE OF ONE WHO HATH *TROD THE STARS*--

--ONLY TO BE TREATED BY THE CELESTIAL AS IF I WERE BUT A *CHILD*, RAILING WITH INEFFECTUAL BLOWS!? 'TWAS--

UNNH! WHAT--? *THOR! FATHER ZURAS!*

'TIS THE ONE CALLED *HERO!*

HAVING NO FURTHER NEED OF HIM, THE PRIME CELESTIAL HATH RE-TURNED *HIM* TO EARTH, AS WELL.

IT MAKES EVEN AN ETERNAL *IN-SECURE*-- TO KNOW THAT ONE WITH OUR POWERS CAN BE PULLED AROUND LIKE SO MANY *PUPPETS* ON INVISIBLE STRINGS!

TO SAY NOTHING OF THE EGO-DEFLATION IT PROVIDES TO MERE *MUTATES* LIKE REJECT AND MYSELF.

SPEAK FOR YOUR-SELF, KARKAS. I DON'T-- *WAIT! LOOK!*

BY ALL THE SAILORS I EVER TURNED INTO SWINE!

HIS FACE--HIS VERY FORM--THEY'RE *CHANGING*--HE'S METAMORPHOSING BEFORE OUR EYES--

--BEING TRANSFORMED BACK INTO THAT WHICH HE *WAS* WHEN HE WALKED AMONG US--

--THE NAMELESS ETERNAL CALLED ONLY--*THE FORGOTTEN ONE!*

NICE OF YOU TO... *REMEMBER* ME.

HELA! HE BE *BLIND!* IN SOOTH, I DID NE'ER *SUSPECT,* ALL THE WHILE WE DID FIGHT...!

NOW, IF YOU DON'T MIND, I FEEL--*UNNNH!*

EASY, VALIANT WARRIOR.

LET THOR HELP THEE TO A PLACE WHERE THOU CANST *REST* FROM THINE ORDEAL.

NO! STAND AWAY FROM THE TRAITOR!

EH? *ZURAS*--'TIS THOU WHO DOST CALL THIS BRAVE ETERNAL "*TRAITOR*"?

KNOWEST THOU NOT THAT HE HAD *NO CHOICE* BUT TO SERVE THE CELESTIALS AS HE DID--

--HAVING BEEN RESCUED FROM UNDYING *OBLIVION* AS HE HAD BEEN BY THE *ONE ABOVE ALL?**

* WAY BACK IN THE ETERNALS #13. --R.T.

YOU CANNOT *PROTECT* THE BETRAYER OF OLYMPIA, GOD OF ASGARD, SO *STAND YOU BACK*--

--BEFORE I FORGET THAT YOU ARE A *GUEST* IN THE LAND OF THE ETERNALS!

STAND YOU BACK, I SAY--SO THAT *ZURAS, MASTER OF OLYMPIA,* MAY DEAL WITH THIS VIPEROUS *TURNCOAT* IN OUR MIDST!

GREAT WAS HIS *BETRAYAL*--GREATER STILL SHALL BE HIS *PUNISHMENT!*

ZURAS! I SAY THEE NAY!

YOU DELPHAN BROTHERS! STOP HIM, BEFORE HE AROUSES ZURAS' WRATH!

WHAT? THOU WOULDST SEND MERE MINIONS 'GAINST ME?

TRULY, THIS BE THE MOST BASE INSULT OF ALL.

HEAR ME, ZURAS!

IF THOR DOTH NOT CHOOSE TO SMITE HIS RECENT FOE--NO MAN OR GOD OR ETERNAL ELSE SHALL DO SO!

UNFFF

FORGIVE HIM, PRIME ONE! HE DOESN'T KNOW WHAT HE'S DOING, THE STRAIN OF BATTLE--

I WILL FORGIVE HIM MUCH, IKARIS. BUT IF HE DARES RAISE HIS MYSTIC HAMMER AGAINST MY STAFF OF POWER--!

I'VE NO WISH TO LOCK IN COMBAT WITH THEE, ZURAS-- BUT I STAND BY THE FORGOTTEN ONE NOW, AS FULLY AS E'ER I DID OPPOSE HIM.

NO, THOR! DON'T ENDANGER YOURSELF FOR MY SAKE.

I'LL TAKE MY PUNISHMENT, AS BEFITS AN ETERNAL.

HAH! MUCH AS I ADMIRE THE THUNDER GOD, I MUST SAY IT DOES MY MUTATE HEART GOOD TO KNOW THAT ETERNALS AND NORSE GODS CAN SQUABBLE AS FOOLISHLY EVEN AS YOU, REJECT.

STRIKE THEM BOTH DOWN, FATHER!

THE WILL OF ZURAS MUST NOT BE CROSSED!

THENA IS RIGHT, GREAT ZURAS! I KNOW THAT, AS A MUTATE, I HAVE NO STANDING IN OLYMPIA-- BUT I SAY, BLAST THEM BOTH!

HMMM... IF YOU CAN'T GET INTO A GOOD FIGHT YOURSELF, REJECT...

...YOU'LL START ONE, EH?

KEEP OUT OF THIS, SERSI!

AYE! LET ALL KEEP BACK, FOR I BE WEARY UNTO DEATH OF TYRANTS-- BE THEY IN ASGARD OR IN OLYMPIA!

AH, SO NOW WE BEGIN TO GET TO THE TRUE ROOTS OF YOUR RASH ANGER.

NO, FATHER ZURAS! I HAVE GOT TO THE REAL BOTTOM OF THINGS...

EH?

...AND ITS NAME IS SPRITE!

SPRITE!? WHY DO YOU TOSS THIS MOST MISCHIEVOUS OF OLYMPIANS AT ME, MAKKARI?

TELL HIM, MINNOW, OR I'LL--

J-JUST GIVE ME A CHANCE, SWIFT ONE.

GREAT ZURAS--FORGIVE ME, ALSO! IT WAS I WHO FREED THE FORGOTTEN ONE AND SENT HIM TO THE CELESTIALS' MOTHERSHIP, WHILE YOU PERFORMED THE RITUAL OF THE UNI-MIND.*

I-- I WAS ONLY TRYING TO HELP...

I SEE.

*ETERNALS #13. --ROY.

SPRITE'S CONFESSION CHANGES NOTHING, FATHER. LET THESE TWO DEFY YOU, AND THE DEVIANTS WILL TAKE HEART FROM THEIR ARROGANCE.

YOU'RE TOO WARLIKE, THENA. THOR WAS MERELY TRYING TO DEFEND A BLIND WARRIOR HE FELT WE'D WRONGED.

PERHAPS I WAS A BIT HASTY. SPRITE HAS EVER BEEN A MIXER, EVEN WHEN THE HUMANS KNEW HIM AS PUCK AND OTHER FAIRY-NAMES.

WHAT SAY YOU IN YOUR OWN DEFENSE, FORGOTTEN ONE?

SIRE, I MEANT NO DEFIANCE, BUT ONLY MEANT TO SAVE THE EARTH-- AND OLYMPIA WITH IT.

I SHALL ACCEPT MY FATE, EVEN THOUGH YOU SHOULD CHAIN ME TO A ROCK FOR ALL ETERNITY.

OR, I SHALL BE FAITHFUL, IF YOU'LL LET ME BE; I NEVER MEANT TO BE OTHERWISE.

THEN RISE..."HERO!"

FROM THIS DAY FORTH, I COMMAND YOU AND SPRITE TO EACH OTHER'S CARE.

HE SHALL BE YOUR EYES-- AND YOU, HOPEFULLY, HIS CONSCIENCE.

AS YOU SAY, SIRE.

HEY, THIS MIGHT EVEN BE FUN!

THEN, ABRUPTLY, AMID A GREAT ROARING SOUND FROM ABOVE--!

MY HEART DOTH REJOICE, ZURAS, THAT THERE BE NO NEED FOR ENMITY 'TWIXT US-- BUT WHAT SPECTACLE BE THIS, I PRAY THEE?

OF A SUDDEN, THE VERY SKY ITSELF BE FILLED WITH LEVITATING ETERNALS-- FAR MORE THAN COULD DWELL IN OLYMPIA ALONE!

I SUMMONED THESE ETERNALS, AND MANY MORE TO COME, FROM EARTH'S FOUR MYTHICAL CORNERS--

YOU ARE ASTUTE, THOR, EVEN IN ADVERSITY.

--THAT WE MIGHT BEGIN THE RITUAL OF THE UNI-MIND!

HERO'S POWER WILL BE WELCOME-- AND YOURS, AS WELL, IF YOU'LL JOIN US.

WHAT BE THIS-- UNI-MIND?

WE SHALL BECOME AS ONE ORGANIC WHOLE--

--ONE MIND, ONE AWESOME ENTITY-- TO BREACH THE SPACE GODS' VESSEL--

--AND FIGHT BACK AGAINST THEM, IF THEY'LL NOT VOW TO SPARE THIS PLANET WE SHARE WITH HUMANS AND DEVIANTS.

'TIS HOPELESS, OLYMPIAN. I KNOW THAT NOW.

THOU WILT BUT ANGER THEM, WHEN THERE MAY BE ANOTHER WAY!

WE'VE JUST BURIED ONE HATCHET, GODLING; LET'S NOT DIG UP ANOTHER!

IN THE NAME OF OUR NEWFOUND FRIENDSHIP, ZURAS-- GIVE ME A LITTLE TIME TO FIND A DIFFERENT COURSE OF ACTION!

AGREED, IF RELUCTANTLY! YOU'VE THE SINGLE DAY IT WILL TAKE THE LAST OF THE ETERNALS TO JOURNEY HERE... NO MORE.

SO BE IT!

I KNOW NOT WHAT I DO SEEK.

YET, IF THERE BE AN ANSWER TO OUR DILEMMA, IT WILL LIE IN ASGARD ITSELF.

THUS, I SHALL RETURN TO THE GLEAMING REALM-- AND DEMAND THE TRUTH OF ALL-FATHER ODIN!

THE SIRE OF GODS, HOWEVER, IS NOT TO BE FOUND AMID THE HALLOWED HALLS OF ASGARD AT THE MOMENT--

--BUT ON THE BROAD BACK OF HIS EIGHT-HOOVED STEED SLEIPNIR, GALLOPING 'TWEEN THE VERY DIMENSIONS--

--GALLOPING TOWARD AN OTHER-WORLDLY MOUNTAIN WHICH HAS, IN TRUTH, A MOST FAMILIAR LOOK.

HO, FAITHFUL MOUNT! IN SCANT TIME HAST THOU BROUGHT ME HERE--

--TO THE OUTER GATES OF OLYMPUS, HOME OF THE GRAECO-ROMAN GODS.

YET, MESEEMS THERE BE THOSE WHO WOULD PREVENT MINE ENTRANCE.

AYE, UNKNOWN ONE.

IDENTIFY THYSELF TO ARGUS, THE ONE-EYED!

I BE ODIN, AS SINGLE-ORBED NOW AS THYSELF-- BUT I'LL SAY NO MORE TO ANY LESSER BEING THAN ZEUS HIMSELF.

ANNOUNCE TO THY MASTER THAT THE LORD OF ASGARD DOTH COMMAND HIS PRESENCE!

NO GODLING, IN OR OUT OF OLYMPUS, DOTH COMMAND ZEUS-- OR E'EN HIS MINIONS.

STRIKE, MY YELLOW-CRESTED TITANS, WITH THE THUNDERBOLTS OF MINE OWN DESIGN!

SHOW YON NORTH-BORN UPSTART HOW WE DEAL WITH INTRUDERS HERE!

THOU WOULDST HURL SKYFIRE AT HIM WHO DID DIRECT THE FORGING OF HIS SON'S OWN STORM-BRINGING HAMMER!?

VERILY, SUCH EFFRONTERY DOTH CRY OUT UNTO THE HEAVENS THEM-SELVES FOR PUNISHMENT!

SZZZZL

LET THY BRAIN-LESS *TITANS* BE FIRST TO FEEL MY WRATH!

SO THOU DOST SUMMON BOLTS FROM *NOWHERE.*

ZRAAK

THEN, I'LL PINION *HANDS, HORSE, AND ALL!*

WHAT? FIRST THOU DOST *MOCK* ME--

--AND NOW, THOU *LAYEST HANDS* UPON ME?

IN SOOTH, MY *PATIENCE* NOW BE AT AN *END!*

'TWAS *NE'ER* THY MOST PROMINENT ATTRIBUTE, LORD OF ASGARD.

FZZAST!

ARRR

NOW WHO DARES TO --

I KNOW WHO *I* BE, AND WHO BE THOSE *BESIDE* ME.

ZEUS! AND WITH THEE, THE ONES CALLED *ARES, HERCULES, AND ATHENA!*

WHAT I WOULD KNOW IS-- WHY HAST *THOU* COME HERE, ODIN?

'TIS NOT OUR *FIRST* MEETING, LORD OF OLYMPUS...

...AND E'EN MY NOW-BANISHED SON ***THOR, GOD OF THUNDER***, DID ONCE ENCOUNTER THINE OWN OFFSPRING; THE MAN-GOD ***HERCULES***, IN A LONG-AGO DAY... IN ***OLYMPUS*** ITSELF. *

HE DID ***FORGET*** THAT ENCOUNTER, OF COURSE-- FOR REASONS WHICH ***THOU*** DOST KNOW FULL WELL AS ***I***, THOUGH NO MAN OR IMMORTAL ***ELSE*** DOTH SUSPECT THEM.

LATER, MINE HEAD-STRONG SON DID LEAD THE VERY ***CREAM OF ASGARD*** 'GAINST THE ***SCIONS OF OLYMPUS***-- TO NO GOOD PURPOSE, ULTIMATELY, ON EITHER SIDE...

...WHILST ***THOU*** AND ***I*** DID GAZE AT EACH OTHER IN STONY SILENCE, ACROSS A BATTLE-FIELD STREWN WITH THE BODIES OF ***GODS.****

NOR, E'EN WHEN THOU DIDST RAISE THY FIRE-TOSSING HAND 'GAINST THOR, IN A LATER DAY, DID I BECOME INVOLVED IN THE QUARREL...

FOR, WHAT CARED I FOR THE FATE OF TIME-LOST ***TROY***, I WHO DWELL FAR OFF IN THE SNOW-CAPPED ***NORTH***?*

*AS SEEN, RESPECTIVELY, IN ***THOR ANNUAL #1***, ***#5***, AND THE SOON-UPCOMING ***#8***. --*RESEARCHIN' ROY.*

NOW, HOWE'ER, I FEEL I MUST ***BREAK*** THE GRIM SILENCE WHICH HATH EXISTED 'TWEEN OUR TWO SPHERES FOR LO, THESE MANY MILLENNIA.

I GREET THEE, I HOPE, AS A ***FRIEND***.

WE SHALL SEE, LORD ODIN... WE SHALL ***SEE***.

WHAT BE THERE TO ***SEE***, MILORD?

WHAT HAVE ***WE*** TO DO WITH SOME RAG-TAG GODLING FROM THE SAVAGE UN-CIVILIZED ***NORTH***?

I SAY, ***SMITE*** HIM, AND SEND HIM HOWLING BACK TO HIS ***GLACIERS***!

LET HIM KNOW THE *POWER OF ZEUS*--THE FIERCE, UNFETTERED FURY OF THE *GODS OF OLYMPUS!*

OH, HOLD THY *TONGUE*, ARES! IGNORE THE FUMING GOD OF WAR, LORD ODIN, AND TELL ME WHAT DOTH BRING THEE SO FAR FROM THINE ACCUSTOMED HAUNTS.

SIMPLY PUT, MILORD ZEUS-- I SEEK THE *HELP OF OLYMPUS.*

THEN 'TIS PRECISELY THAT WE SHOULD *DENY* HIM, SIRE!

WHAT? DOTH *HERCULES* HAVE AUGHT TO SAY, ERE E'EN ODIN HATH FULLY REVEALED HIS MISSION?

AYE, MY FATHER...

FROM OLYMPUS' HEIGHTS OF LATE, I HAVE SEEN HIS OWN SON *THOR*--MY FRIEND AND ALLY IN DAYS PAST--*EXILED* FROM ASGARD, BECAUSE HE WOULD SAVE THE EARTH BELOW FROM VILE *SPACE-BEINGS.*

I SAY, HAVE *NAUGHT* TO DO WITH YONDER KING OF VILLAINY!

IN THINE OWN WAY *THOU* DOST LOVE EARTH FULL WELL AS MUCH AS *THOR*, PRINCE OF POWER.

AYE, LORD ZEUS-- AND 'TIS *ABOUT* MY SON'S OBSESSION WITH THAT SPINNING MUDBALL THAT I HAVE COME.

I WOULD PROPOSE AN *ALLIANCE* 'TWIXT ASGARD AND OLYMPUS-- EFFECTIVE AT ONCE--

--TO *SMASH* ANY AND ALL WHO WOULD STRIVE TO SAVE MIDGARD FROM *DEATH AND DESTRUCTION!*

BY THE CLOVEN HOOVES OF CHIRON!

WHILE, IN COSMOS-DISTANT ASGARD...

OH, BALDER-- MY BELOVED *BALDER*--

IF 'TWOULD BRING THEE BACK TO THE *LIFE* OF WHICH BLIND HODER'S ARROW ROBBED THEE, I'D SACRIFICE *ASGARD ITSELF* ON HELA'S ALTAR!

I BEG THEE, KARNILLA-- SPEAK NOT SUCH *BLASPHEMY* IN THE REALM ETERNAL!

WHAT MINE HUSBAND DID IN ALLOWING BALDER TO HOVER THUS 'TWEEN LIFE AND DEATH, HE DID FOR THE *GOOD OF ALL.*

I CARE LITTLE FOR HIS *MOTIVES*, GENTLE FRIGGA...

YET, HOW CANST *THOU* BE SO CERTAIN OF THEM, WHEN SO MUCH OF *THINE OWN PAST* BE SHROUDED IN DARK MYSTERY?

PLEASE, NORN-QUEEN...!

I MEAN NOT TO BE *CRUEL*...

BUT, IS IT NOT TRUE THAT, THOUGH THOU ART *WIFE* TO ODIN, THOU ART *NOT* THE MOTHER OF HIS ONLY BLOOD-SON, *THOR*?

THOU *ART* CRUEL, KARNILLA TO REMIND ME OF THAT FACT.

ODIN BE CRUEL, RATHER, TO HAVE ACCOMPLISHED IT.

AND HOW MUCH *MORE* HEARTLESS, TO HAVE SACRIFICED BALDER TO BRING ABOUT A *FALSE RAGNAROK*, AND THUS STAVE OFF THE *TRUE* ONE--

--AT A TIME WHEN THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS DID NOT EVEN *THREATEN*, TILL THE DEATH-GODDESS SAW THAT BALDER WAS INDEED *BROUGHT LOW!*

'TWAS A NEEDLESS, MOST *VICIOUS* ACT, AND ALL THY WIFELY PROTESTATIONS MAY NOT--

THAT *SOUND!* WHAT--?

THOU DOST KNOW IT *WELL*, NORN-QUEEN.

'TIS THE *HORN OF HEIMDALL!*

HO, YE GODS! HEIMDALL HATH STRUCK THE NOTE WHICH PROCLAIMS THAT A *FOE OF ASGARD* DOTH DRAW NEAR!

THEN, *WEAPONS* AT THE READY, ALL!

FOR, THOUGH *ODIN* HIMSELF BE GONE, AND OTHERS OF ASGARD'S MIGHTIEST BE EITHER ABSENT OR EXILED--

STILL, WE'LL *MASS* AT THE RAINBOW BRIDGE, TO HOLD IT FAST AGAINST--

--*THOR!?*

HAIL, SCIONS OF THE GLEAMING REALM!

STAY BACK, GOD OF THUNDER!

TILL *ODIN* HIMSELF DOTH GIVE THE WORD, THERE BE *NO ROOM* FOR THEE IN ASGARD!

NO ROOM!? REMEMBER, OLD FRIEND, 'TWAS *I* WHO DID BANISH MYSELF; THUS, I MAY *END* MINE OWN EXILE, AS WELL.

NOW, *STAND ASIDE!* I WOULD SEE MY *SIRE!*

HE IS *NOT HERE*--AND IN HIS ABSENCE, WE DARE *NOT* LET THEE ENTER.

WE BEG THEE, ODINSON... *BEGONE*, AND DO NOT MAKE US *FIGHT* THEE!

VERILY, I CANNOT BELIEVE MINE *EARS.*

HATH IT COME TO *THIS?*

I FEAR IT *HATH*, MY BELOVED.

LADY SIF-- APPEARING FROM NO-WHERE--

AND, BENEATH THINE ARM-- THE LIMP FORM OF THE HATED *DESTROYER!*

'TWAS TO RETRIEVE *IT*, THEN, THOU WERT SENT HENCE BY ODIN.

HELP ME, MILADY, TO PERSUADE YON GODLINGS TO LET ME PASS WITHOUT A *BATTLE*, THAT I MAY--

THOU MUST *NOT* STRIVE TO ENTER ASGARD NOW, BELOVED.

THE ALL-FATHER HATH *FORBADE* IT, TILL HE HIMSELF DOTH RETURN.

WHAT? *THOU*, *ALSO*, WOMAN?

THE *GODDESS I LOVE*-- ARRAYED AGAINST ME WITH THESE OTHERS?

ONLY WITH DIREST *REGRET*, MILORD.

I PRAY THEE, WAIT FOR ODIN'S *RETURN*, THAT--

NAY! IF ODIN BE NOT HERE TO ANSWER MY QUESTIONS, THEN I'LL FORCE AN ANSWER FROM *MIMIR*, THAT FIERY HEAD OF WISDOM!

THE SANDS OF EARTH'S TIME RUN *LOW*-- AND I MUST FIND A WAY AT ONCE TO *REPLENISH* THEM.

THEN WE ARE LEFT *NO CHOICE.*

ATTACK, ASGARDIANS! REPULSE, BUT DO NOT HARM HIM!

"REPULSE, BUT DO NOT HARM"!?

BE THE THUNDER GOD A MERE *TROLL*-- NAY, THE ILL-NOURISHED *OFFSPRING* OF A TROLL-- TO BE THUS PATTED 'PON THE HEAD AND SENT MERRILY ON HIS WAY?

I SAY THEE-- *NAY!*

*NEXT INSTANT, LIKE A GRIM SPECTRE OF REVENGE, THOR HURLS HIMSELF INTO THE VERY **MIDST** OF HIS FELLOW GODS, WHO FOR A MOMENT ARE TOO STUNNED TO STRIKE BACK.*

*BUT THEN, IT IS **TOO LATE!***

*BUT, WHAT OF THE LADY **SIF**, NEARBY?*

--I MUST DO-- WHAT I DID *SWEAR* TO DO--!

MUCH THOUGH IT MAY *GRIEVE* ME--

BACK, STORM-GOD! WE HAVE OUR ORDERS-- AND THEY SAY *THOU SHALT NOT PASS!*

THEN HEAR THOU *THIS*, LODUR-- ALL OF YE--

IF *THOR* MAY NOT TREAD UPON THE RAINBOW BRIDGE--

--THEN *NO* GOD SHALL!

ODIN'S WOUNDS! HE HATH SHATTERED BIFROST *ASUNDER* WITH HIS MYSTIC HAMMER!

RAAK K K

AYE, AND I'LL DO *MORE* DAMAGE YET, IF THOU WILT NOT STAND ASIDE AND LET ME ENTER ASGARD.

WELL, MY ERSTWHILE FRIENDS? WHICH SHALL IT BE?

HE DOES NOT SEE THE MASS-IVE SHADOW BEHIND HIM...

...THOUGH, A MOMENT LATER, HE FEELS THE EQUALLY MASSIVE **FIST!**

FWOM!

UNNH

WITH A GRIP OF LIVING, INDESTRUCTIBLE METAL, THE **DESTROYER**-- MIGHTIEST MANLIKE CREATION OF ALL-FATHER ODIN, IN AGES PAST-- **LIFTS** THE STUNNED GOD OF THUNDER IN A BONE-CRUSHING GRIP--

--ONLY TO DISCOVER THAT THE IRRESISTIBLE **FORCE** HAS AT LAST MET THE IMMOVABLE **OBJECT!**

HAVE AT THEE, MONSTER!

THANG!

BACK THE BEHEMOTH STAGGERS, AS WORDLESSLY AS IN BATTLES **PAST.**

BUT, THIS TIME, THE ASGARDIAN REALIZES, EVEN AS HE **STRIKES** THE DESTROYER--

WHOMP!

--THAT SOMETHING **NEW** HAS BEEN ADDED!

BY THE SEVERED HAND OF TYR! IN MINE ANGER AT BEING STRUCK FROM BEHIND, I DID NOT *REALIZE*--!

YONDER THE LADY *SIF* DOTH LIE, *SENSELESS.*

THEN, SURELY--'TIS **HER** SPIRIT WHICH THIS DAY DOTH ACTIVATE THE ELSE-LIFELESS FORM OF THE ***DESTROYER!***

BUT WHY? ***WHY,*** MY BELOVED, DOST THOU SEEK TO BAR MINE ENTRANCE INTO MINE ***HOMELAND?***

HIS ONLY ANSWER, HOWEVER, FROM THE MOUTHLESS MONSTROSITY...

...IS ONCE MORE FORMED OF MOVING METAL!

AND, UNWILLING TO STRIKE BACK-- OR EVEN TO DEFEND HIMSELF PROPERLY-- THOR FALLS--

--AND THIS TIME, AS NEVER BEFORE, THE DESTROYER STANDS TRIUMPHANT!

THEN, BEFORE THE STORM-GOD CAN RECOVER, OR EVEN FORM A PLAN OF ACTION IN HIS IMMORTAL MIND--

--HE IS HURLED FROM THE GLEAMING RAINBOW BRIDGE--

--BACK TOWARD THAT BRIGHT BLUE MARBLE EARTH, SPINNING SO FAR BELOW...SO FAR AWAY IN TIME AND SPACE!

FOR AN INSTANT, THE DESTROYER-FIGURE TURNS ITS GREAT HANDS TOWARD THE BLACK STAR-FLUNG HEAVENS BEYOND EVEN ASGARD-- AS IF, IN ITS VICTORY, IT HAS **ERASED** THE MEMORIES, THE FEELINGS OF HER WHO DWELLS WITHIN.

BUT THEN-- A VAPOROUS **FORM** FLITS 'TWIXT TWO MORE SOLID ONES...

...AND THE LADY **SIF** STANDS DAZED AND CRYING.

THOR... BELOVED... F-FORGIVE ME...!

NEXT INSTANT, AS SHE REGAINS HER SENSES MORE FULLY...

THOR! I STRUCK HIM, HEIMDALL, MY BROTHER!

I-- I MUST GO TO HIM--!

NO, MY SISTER! IT IS FOR-BIDDEN!

AND SO, THE WARDER OF BIFROST STAYS HIS GRIEVING SISTER...

...WHILE THE COLOR-FUL FIGURE OF THE **GOD SHE LOVES** PLUMMETS DOWN-WARD, AND INTO THE **MIDGARD-PLANE.**

AND, SOMEWHERE IN THE TOWERING **ANDES MOUNTAINS**, BEHIND A DOME WHICH EVEN MYSTIC MJOLNIR COULD NOT SHATTER...

...THE 2000-FOOT CELESTIAL CALLED **ARISHEM** TURNS HIS GREAT, FEATURELESS FACE SKYWARD...

...TO BEHOLD WHAT SEEMS A **METEOR**, DOOMED TO BURN TO BRIGHT NOTHING-NESS IN THE COLD LIGHT OF DAWN...!

NEXT • ISSUE •

EL TORO ROJO!

THAT'S SPANISH FOR "**THE RED BULL**"-- AND IT'S MARVEL-TALK FOR **ACTION!** BE HERE, HALCYON ONE!

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THE MIGHTY

THOR™

NOT EVEN MY MYSTIC *HAMMER* CAN STOP-- *EL TORO ROJO!*

KEITH & BOB

When DR. DONALD BLAKE strikes his wooden walking-stick upon the ground, it becomes the mystic hammer MJOLNIR— and the lame physician is transformed into the Norse God of Thunder, Master of the Storm, Lord of the Living Lightning— and heir to the throne of eternal Asgard....

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY THOR!®

RING AROUND THE RED BULL!

METEOR: FROM THE GREEK "METEŌROS" MEANING "LOFTY" OR "RAISED"; ORIGINALLY USED TO REFER TO ANY PHENOMENON OR OBJECT IN THE SKY.

IT HAS BEEN ESTIMATED THAT THE PLANET EARTH, IN ANY GIVEN 24-HOUR PERIOD, ENCOUNTERS UP TO 200,000,000 METEORS OF VARIOUS SHAPES AND SIZES.

THIS ONE, HOWEVER, IS DESTINED TO BE A WEE BIT UNIQUE...!

ROY THOMAS — WRITER / EDITOR
ARVELL JONES — GUEST PENCILER
CHIC STONE, INKER
CARL GAFFORD — COLORIST
JOE ROSEN — LETTERER
JIM SHOOTER — CONSULTING EDITOR

FOR, WHAT HAD SEEMED A MOMENT BEFORE AN **INANIMATE OBJECT** NOW SPRINGS SUDDENLY, STARTLINGLY, TO LIFE...

...AND **CHANGES DIRECTION** UNDER ITS OWN POWER, THE COLORFUL HUMAN-LIKE FORM TOWED ALONG BY THE GLOWING STONE **HAMMER** WHICH HAS BEEN FLUNG IN DEFIANCE OF ALL NEWTONIAN LAW.

THEN, EVEN AS ITS FALL TO EARTH IS THUS SLOWED, THIS OBJECT... THIS BEING...**REMEMBERS:**

...REMEMBERS A **BATTLE** WITH GOD-BEINGS LIKE ITSELF, IN A LAND WHICH WAS SOMEHOW **BEYOND** BOTH TIME AND SPACE...

...A RAGING MELEE WHICH OCCURRED BECAUSE THEY WOULD NOT LET HIM ENTER HIS GLEAMING HOMELAND... THE PLACE CALLED **ASGARD!**

AYE-- **ASGARD!** THE MEMORIES CROWD HIM 'ROUND NOW, AND THE PLUMMETING FIGURE SEES HIMSELF ONCE MORE UPON A **BRIDGE** WHICH IS NEITHER LIGHT NOR SUBSTANCE... AND COLORED LIKE THE VERY **RAINBOW.**

HE BATTLES AGAIN, IN HIS MIND'S EYE, A THING OF **LIVING METAL** WHICH FOR SOME REASON, HE CANNOT BRING HIMSELF TO **SMITE**...

...WITH THE RESULT THAT HE HIMSELF IS **HURLED,** DEFEATED NOW AS THEN, FROM THE GLOWING BRIDGE... WHENCE HE RE-ENTERS THE **DIMENSION OF MEN,** SOMEWHERE BEYOND EARTH'S TROUBLED ATMOSPHERE.

HE RECALLS NOW, TOO, **WHY** HE COULD NOT STRIKE THE AWESOME **DESTROYER.**

ITS METAL FORM WAS EMPOWERED BY THE LIFE-FORCE OF THE LADY **SIF**-- THE GODDESS WHOM THOR **LOVES** BEYOND ALL MEASURE!

AND, WITH THE REMEMBRANCE AT LAST OF HIS OWN TIMELESS NAME, THE THUNDER GOD LEVELS OFF, NOT FAR ABOVE THIS MORTAL COIL, JUST IN TIME TO VIEW WITH AMAZED EYES --

BY HEIMDALL'S HORN!

'TIS -- THE HULK!

HATH THE GREEN BEHEMOTH BEGUN A NEW RAMPAGE, OR -- NAY!

I SEE NOW THE FILM CAMERAS WHICH DO PROCLAIM THAT HE BE BUT AN ACTOR, BATHED IN GREEN!

VERILY, I MUST BE BACK ON EARTH, WHERE ALONE REALITY AND ILLUSION BE THUS SHACKLED TOGETHER --

--AND, BY THE VAGARIES OF FATE, I HAVE FINISHED MY HEADLONG DESCENT IN THAT VERY PLACE WHERE THE TWO BE MIXED BEYOND ALL HOPE OF SEPARATION!*

HOLLYWOOD

*WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO ALICE COOPER, HUGH HEFNER, AND OTHERS FOR RESTORING OUR BELOVED SIGN IN TIME FOR THIS COMICBOOK. --ROY.

BUT -- WHAT'S THIS AHEAD OF ME?

IT SEEMS A MAN -- GLIDING AWKWARDLY THROUGH THE SKY.

SURELY, 'TIS MORE VAUNTED "MOVIE MAGIC," AS THEY OF MIDGARD DO CALL IT...

YET -- NAY! I SEE NOW THERE BE NO HIDDEN HELICOPTER -- NO NIGH-INVISIBLE WIRES TO SUSTAIN HIS FLIGHT --

--BUT ONLY A MAN, BEATING WITH INEFFECTUAL WINGS IN A VAIN EFFORT TO REMAIL ALOFT!

MORE: HE FALLS, LIKE ICARUS GONE TOO NEAR THE SUN!

ICARUS! THE VERY WORD REMINDS ME OF IKARIS, THAT WORTHY ETERNAL FOR WHOM THE MYTHICAL GREEK HERO WAS NAMED.

OR WAS IT, AS THE LATINS SAID, VICE VERSA?

TIME ENOW LATER FOR SUCH THOUGHTS...

NOW, I MUST NEEDS DISCOVER WHO THIS MORTAL IS... IF MORTAL HE BE...AND HOW HE HATH GAINED THE POWER OF FLIGHT...ONLY TO LOSE IT AGAIN.

GRACIAS... SEÑOR THOR...!

YOU SPEAK SPANISH! OF COURSE! NOW I DO REALIZE--

WE BE ABOVE THE BARRIO, THAT PART OF LOS ANGELES WHERE MANY CHICANOS* DO DWELL.

*MEXICAN-AMERICANS, OF COURSE.--R.T.

WHO ART THOU, FRIEND-- AND HOW HAST THOU COME TO HARM?

FOR I SEE NOW THOU HAST BEEN MOST SAVAGELY GORED-- AS IF BY A RAGING BULL.

SI, THUNDER GOD...THAT IS JUST WHAT HAPPENED.

MY NAME...THE ONLY ONE YOU NEED KNOW...IS VAMPIRO...

THEN THOU ART WELL-NAMED, VAMPIRO... FOR I DO SEE THAT THY STRANGELY SHARP TEETH BE REAL, NOT SOME DENTIST'S FAKERY.

THEY ARE... INDEED REAL...AS REAL AS I AM.

BUT WHO-- WHAT ART THOU? THOU HAST NOT--

I KNOW OF YOU, THUNDER GOD... MORE THAN MOST MEN DO...

"...SO I WILL TELL YOU... WHAT HAPPENED TO ME.

"YOU MUST KNOW, FIRST, THAT I AM A WRESTLER--AND ONE NOT WITHOUT FAME... BOTH HERE...AND IN MEXICO.*

HO, DEMONIO! TONIGHT IS VAMPIRO'S NIGHT TO FLY, NOT YOURS!

"SINCE I ENTERED THE RING...SOME YEARS AGO...I HAVE BECOME ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR OF THE MASKED ONES...FOR I AM ALWAYS VICTORIOUS...

¡ THE WINNER-- EL VAMPIRO!

¡VIVA VAMPIRO!

*MASKED WRESTLERS HAVE BEEN EXTREMELY POPULAR IN MEXICO AND OTHER LATIN-AMERICAN COUNTRIES FOR SEVERAL DECADES. --ROY.

"THEN, ONLY DAYS AGO...I ANSWERED THE PUBLIC CHALLENGE OF AN *ENMASCARDO** UNKNOWN TO ME...ONE WHO CALLED HIMSELF ***EL TORO ROJO***...THE ***RED BULL***...

"...AND SUDDENLY FOUND MYSELF FIGHTING AS NEVER BEFORE... AND ***LOSING!***

YOU ARE ***BEATEN,*** VAMPIRO!

I--DO NOT ***THINK*** SO, TORO--

*SPANISH FOR 'MASKED ONE! --R.T.

¡YIII!

--FOR, I KNOW ***SECRETS*** OF WRESTLING--AND OF OTHER THINGS--YOU COULD NEVER ***GUESS!***

"THE NEXT MOMENT, HOWEVER...I LEARNED THAT EL TORO ROJO HAD SECRETS OF HIS OWN...AND THAT HE WAS ***NOT*** WHAT HE HAD SEEMED.

"FOR, THE FIERCE ***HORNS*** ON HIS HEAD WERE NOT ATTACHED TO HIS ***MASK***...

"THEY WERE ***REAL!***

¡THWAM!

"EL TORO WAS... A ***DEVIANT!***

"AH, MI AMIGO...I SEE YOU ARE ASTONISHED... THAT I KNOW THIS WORD...'***DEVIANT.***'

"I HAVE KNOWN IT FAR LONGER...FAR MORE DEEPLY THAN ***YOU,*** I FEAR.

"AND, AS I WAS CARRIED...BADLY ***GORED*** BY HIS HORNS... FROM THE RING...I HEARD HIM HISS WORDS AT ME...IN A TONGUE NO OTHER MAN PRESENT COULD HAVE KNOWN...

THAT WAS BUT A ***WARNING!***

FROM TODAY I SHALL MAKE YOUR LIFE A ***LIVING HELL*** -- ETERNAL!

HE DID CALL THEE..."*ETERNAL*"! DOTH THAT MEAN--?

SI, THUNDER GOD. I AM ONE OF THOSE... WHO SERVE *ZURAS*, MASTER OF FAR *OLYMPIA*.

A BIT MORE *COFFEE*, IF YOU WILL, MARIA.

THAT IS HOW I KNOW *MORE* ABOUT YOU...THAN THOSE WHO MERELY READ *EL DIARIO*.*

*L.A.'S SPANISH-LANGUAGE NEWSPAPER.--R.T.

IT IS ALSO HOW I KNOW THAT *YOU* KNOW...ABOUT THE ETERNALS AND THEIR AGE-OLD WAR WITH THE MORTAL-HATING *DEVIANTS*.

HOW? I STILL UNDERSTAND NOT.

A SHORT WHILE AGO... AS I LAY RECOVERING FROM EL TORO ROJO'S ATTACK...

"...MY BRAIN WAS INVADED...BY AN INFRA-SONIC CALL FROM *MAJOR DOMO*...HE WHO SITS ON FATHER ZURAS' RIGHT HAND.

COME TO OLYMPIA!

"I KNEW INSTANTLY...ALL ETERNALS WERE BEING SUMMONED TO BEGIN...THE *RITUAL OF THE UNI-MIND*...

"...AND THAT *YOU* WERE SOMEHOW INVOLVED. INDEED, I LEARNED... *MUCH* THAT HAS BEFALLEN YOU... THESE DAYS PAST.

I SUPPOSE ONE CAN TRANSMIT OR UNDERSTAND MUCH, WHEN 'TIS DONE AT THE *SPEED OF LIGHT*.

THOU DOST THINK, THEN, THAT THY *DEVIANT FOE* WISHED TO *PREVENT* THEE FROM RETURNING TO DISTANT OLYMPIA?

EVERY ETERNAL WHO IS MISSING... MERELY *WEAKENS* THE POWER OF THE UNI-MIND. I-- *WHAT'S THAT??*

THE STAMPING OF *HOOVES*, WITHOUT! STAND THEE *BACK*, BOTH!

IT CAN ONLY BE-- *EL TORO ROJO!*

I *TOLD* YOU I WOULD COME FOR YOU, SCUM OF OLYMPIA!

AS AN ETERNAL, YOU CANNOT BE *KILLED*-- BUT MY RENDING, TEARING HORNS CAN MAKE YOU *WISH* TO BE DEAD!

YOU ARE *MAD*, TORO!

WE SHOULD NOT BE ENEMIES, BUT *ALLIES*-- JOINED AGAINST THE *JUDGMENT OF THE CELESTIALS!*

¡IMBÉCIL! YOU WOULD HAVE BEEN HURT BEYOND ALL HEALING, WHEN YOU STUPIDLY TRIED TO ANSWER ZURAS' CALL-- BUT FOR THE INTERFERENCE OF THE *ASGARDIAN.*

FORTUNATELY, I WAS *WATCHING* FROM AFAR WHEN HE SAVED YOU--

--AND NOW, EL TORO ROJO SHALL *FINISH* WHAT HE HAS BEGUN!

STAND ASIDE, BLOND ONE!

I SAY THEE *NAY,* DEVIANT--

--NAY, A *THOUSAND THOUSAND TIMES!*

WOK!

BY HEIMDALL'S HORN! YON BLOW WOULD HAVE CRUSHED MOST *MORTAL* SUPER-VILLAINS I HAVE BATTLED--

YET, THOU DOST MERELY *CAREEN* FROM PILLAR TO POST!

THEN, 'TIS TIME THOU DIDST FEEL THE *FULL, UNFETTERED* POWER OF THOR--

--AND OF THE MYSTIC HAMMER CALLED *MJOLNIR!*

I DO NOT *THINK* SO, AMIGO.

PERHAPS *MAÑANA.*

GOOD! AT LEAST I FORCED HIM FROM EL VAMPIRO'S HOUSE, SO THAT THE WOUNDED ETERNAL AND HIS MORTAL WIFE ARE IN LESS DANGER.

NOW, WHEN MJOLNIR DOTH RETURN TO MINE HAND, I SHALL WIELD IT *PERSON-ALLY* AGAINST MY FOE.

HAVE AT THEE, TORO! *THOR* STANDS READY!

WHAT IN THE NAME OF THE *NORN QUEEN*--?

WE *DEVIANTS* HAVE STUDIED MUCH ABOUT YOU AS WELL, THUNDER GOD-- SINCE YOU HELPED THE ETERNALS DESTROY OUR UNDER-GROUND CITY.*

WE LEARNED HOW *DEPENDENT* YOU ARE UPON YOUR VAUNTED HAMMER-- AND HOW IT MUST EVER *RE-TURN* TO YOUR HAND, NO MATTER HOW HARD IT IS HURLED.

*SEE ISSUE #286:-R.

BUT, OF ALL DEVIANTS, *EL TORO ROJO* ALONE HAS THE STRENGTH TO *STOP* IT-- TO SEND IT *HURTLING AWAY*--

--BY *BUTTING* IT WITH MY INVULNERABLE *HEAD!*

¡SLAM!

'TIS BEYOND BELIEF! THOU HAST *DEFLECTED* MJOLNIR'S COURSE!

SI, INTRUDING ONE...

AND NOW, WE SHALL SEE HOW WELL YOU FARE WHEN IT IS *FIST* AGAINST POUNDING *FIST!*

SO BE IT!

FOR LONG SECONDS, ASGARDIAN AND DEVIANT LOCK IN COMBAT, NEITHER PROTAGONIST GAINING OR LOSING AN INCH...

THOU ART *STRONGER*, BY FAR-- THAN ANY DEVIANT OR MUTATE I HAVE FOUGHT-- ERE NOW!

I HAVE *TRAINED* FOR THIS MOMENT-- TRAINED *LONG*--

--AND *THIS*, AS THE MATADORS SAY, IS THE *MOMENT OF TRUTH!*

'TIS WELL! HE DOTH NOT *SUSPECT!*

I *ALLOWED* MYSELF TO BE HURLED HEADLONG THUS--

--THAT I MIGHT RETRIEVE MINE *HAMMER* AND-- *NAY!* IT CANNOT BE!

HATH IT BEEN *SO LONG*--?

¿QUE--?

*CABEZA DE HERMANO TODE!**

¿QUE PASA??*

*"HEAD OF BROTHER TODE! WHAT'S HAPPENING?" --R.T.

NOW-- THE THUNDER GOD IS *GONE*, AND SOME SPINDLY *HUMAN SPECIMEN* SPRAWLS BEFORE ME!

SPEAK, MORTAL! WHERE IS HE?

I'LL NEVER TELL!

¿NO?

OWWW

HE'S HURLING ME THROUGH THE *AIR*-- AT FRIGHTENING *SPEED!*

LUCKY HE DIDN'T DECIDE TO *GORE* ME!

--I WILL SEND YOU TO *JOIN* HIM, WHEREVER HE HAS HIDDEN!

THEN, BY THE DARK SIDE OF THE EARTH, WHERE I WAS SPAWNED--

LUCKY!? WHAT IN BLAZES AM I *THINKING*?

I'M HEADED STRAIGHT FOR THAT WALL! I'LL BE *KILLED!*

AND IF *DON BLAKE* DIES-- *SO* DOES *THOR!!*

*BUT, IT SEEMS THIS IS **NOT** THE DAY THOR'S EARTHLY INCARNATION WILL PERISH-- FOR, AT THE LAST POSSIBLE INSTANT--*

UNNH

VAMPIRO!

OH-- *MIO ESPOSO!*

YOUR HUSBAND'LL *LIVE*, MARIA. BEING AN ETERNAL, HE'S A LOT *HARDIER* THAN US MORTALS.

BUT, THAT *MANIAC* CALLED *EL TORO ROJO*--?

HE *FLED*-- WITH YOUR *WALKING STICK*-- I DID NOT SEE *WHERE*.

WITH MY--? *WONDERFUL!*

BUT WHY WOULD HE HAVE RUN OFF? HE WAS *WINNING!*

TAKE ME... INSIDE... I WILL TELL YOU...!

HE MUST HAVE THOUGHT YOU A *DEAD MAN*... AND THOR *GONE*.

I KNOW... EL TORO HAS A *MATCH* TONIGHT.

HE WILL *RETURN* FOR ME-- WHEN HE HAS FINISHED.

NOT IF I GET TO HIM *FIRST!*

SOON, AS VAMPIRO'S MORTAL WIFE DRIVES BLAKE TOWARD THE HEART OF THE BARRIO...

THIS IS *INSANE!* THE DEVIANTS DON'T KNOW THE SECRET OF *MJOLNIR*... BUT TORO DID GUESS SOMEHOW THAT MY *WALKING-STICK* WAS IMPORTANT TO ME.

IMPORTANT!? WITHOUT IT, I CAN'T TURN BACK TO THOR-- *EVER!*

AND I'VE *GOT* TO-- SO I CAN GET BACK TO *OLYMPIA* AND STOP THE ETERNALS THERE FROM ATTACKING THE CELESTIALS AS THE *UNI-MIND*, AND MAYBE BRINGING DOWN THE *WRATH OF THE SPACE GODS* ON EARTH A HALF CENTURY AHEAD OF SCHEDULE! *

¿ENTIENDE UD. QUE PASA?

*SEE PRECEDING ISSUES. --ROY.

OH, I AM SORRY, *SEÑOR*. YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND SPANISH, *SI*?

VERY LITTLE-- BUT MY ALTER EGO *THOR* KNOWS MOST EARTHLY LANGUAGES.

IT MUST BE-- *DIFFICULT*, MARIA... A MORTAL, MARRIED TO AN *ETERNAL*.

SI... FOR I KNOW I SHALL *DIE* ONE DAY, WHILE VAMPIRO SHALL SIMPLY RETURN TO *OLYMPIA*.

BUT, WHILE I LIVE, HE IS MY *HUSBAND*, *SEÑOR*...

--AND I SHALL DO WHAT I *MUST*, TO HELP HIM... AND THOSE WHO ARE HIS *FRIENDS*.

IF I DON'T *SEE* YOUR HUSBAND AGAIN, MARIA, PLEASE TELL HIM...

...TELL HIM I SAID HE WAS A VERY LUCKY... *ETERNAL*.

ESTA NOCHE

HERE IS THE *ARENA*, SEÑOR! I WILL PARK THE CAR, AND WE WILL--

NO, MARIA! JUST RACE HOME-- AND GET YOUR *HUSBAND* OUT OF THERE, FAST!

I'M NOT SURE I CAN *STOP* EL TORO... AND IF I DON'T HE'LL BE BACK AFTER THE MATCH TO *SMASH* VAMPIRO FOR GOOD.

DO YOU HEAR ME? *GET OUT OF HERE!*

GOOD LUCK!? I'LL *NEED* IT-- AND *MORE!*

YOU ARE RIGHT, SEÑOR. *¡BUENA FORTUNA!*

WHILE, INSIDE--

<DO YOU SEE I *TOY* WITH YOU, HALCON D'ORO*?>

<NEVER BEFORE-- HAVE I MET ONE-- SO *STRONG!*>

*HAWK OF GOLD. --R.

I DON'T *BELIEVE* THIS! TORO LEFT A FREE-FOR-ALL WITH *THOR*-- SO HE COULD KEEP A *WRESTLING DATE!?*

WELL, ANYWAY, THERE'S MY *WALKING-STICK* IN HIS COPNER, AND IF MY *BUM LEG* HOLDS OUT--

HOLD IT, BLAKE! MAYBE TORO'S NOT THE *ONLY* ONE WHO'S CRAZY.

I CAN'T GO RUNNING AROUND IN PLAIN SIGHT AS *DON BLAKE.*

IF I *DO* MANAGE TO CHANGE TO THOR, SOMEBODY MIGHT *RECOGNIZE* ME LATER--

--AND I STILL HAVEN'T DECIDED IF I WANT TO *HANG ON* TO THIS MORTAL IDENTITY, SO TILL I *DO*--!

<WHAT IS THIS? A *NEW* MASKED ONE??>

<YOU ARE FORTUNATE, HALCON. I WILL NOT BOTHER TO *GORE* YOU, AS I DID VAMPIRO... BECAUSE, AS A MORTAL, YOU ARE NO REAL THREAT TO ME.>

<BUT YOU WILL *NEVER FIGHT AGAIN*-- AFTER I HAVE TAKEN THIS *CANE* TO YOU!>

<STOP!>

<I DON'T KNOW-- WHAT YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT-- BUT I AM *BEATEN*--!>

¡CUIDADO! ¿ES USTED LOCO?

I MUST BE LOCO, TO BE DOING THIS!

A CRIPPLED PHYSICIAN MAKING LIKE THE *DURANGO KID*-- AND CRAWLING INTO THE RING WITH A GUY WHO JUST FOUGHT THE *GOD OF THUNDER* TO A VIRTUAL STANDSTILL!

BUT, IF I HADN'T ACTED-- TORO'S OPPONENT WAS A *DEAD MAN.*

¡USTED!*

I DO NOT KNOW WHO YOU ARE, MORTAL, BUT I RECOGNIZE YOUR CLOTHES -- YOUR *LIMP*-- FROM OUR EARLIER MEETING.

*YOU! --R.T.

I HAD *NO TIME* TO STOP AND SLAY YOU BEFORE, BUT *THIS* TIME I SHALL--

〈*WAIT*, TORO! YOUR FIGHT-- IS *WITH ME!*〉

〈WHAT? YOU DARE TO RISE, AFTER *EL TORO ROJO* HAS FELLED YOU?〉

〈BY THE SPACE GODS, YOU WILL *NOT* DO SO AGAIN!〉

GOOD! IT WAS A HARD BLOW-- BUT I DOUBT IT WAS *LETHAL.*

UNNH

AT LEAST THAT GETS THE MORTAL WRESTLER *OUT* OF THE RING--

¡DIO MIO!

--AND GIVES *ME* A CHANCE TO DO-- *THIS!!*

LET GO OF THE STICK, MORTAL-- IF YOU KNOW WHAT IS *GOOD* FOR YOU!

SOMEHOW, IT WAS *THOR'S* BEFORE-- AND NOW IT IS *MINE!*

NOTHING CAN MAKE ME LET GO OF THIS STICK, FRIEND. *NOTHING!*

NOTHING, FOOL? NOT EVEN-- *DEATH??*

WELL-- MAYBE *THAT!*

THOMP!

ZLRAKK!

GREAT! I GOADED HIM INTO SWINGING THE STICK HARD ENOUGH TO HIT THE *FLOOR!*

YOU AGAIN-- AND *HERE!?*

THEN-- AT LAST I HAVE LEARNED THE *SECRET* OF THE STICK!

MAYHAP THOU *HAST,* EVIL ONE--

-- MUCH *GOOD* MAY IT DO THEE!

¿QUE--?

STOP! THE FIGHT IS OVER!

NAY, REFEREE, 'TWILL *NE'ER* BE ENDED--

--TILL *EL TORO ROJO* BE DEFEATED-- *THUS!*

SLAMM!

*LOOK! THE WINGED ONE HURLED EL TORO RIGHT THROUGH THE **FLOOR** OF THE RING!*

*BUT IS HE THE **REAL** THOR, OR ONLY A **MASKED WRESTLER** IN A GOLDEN WIG?*

I HAVE *HEARD* THY WORDS, MAN OF MIDGARD...

AND SO, KNOW THEE THIS: 'TIS *THOR* WHO DOTH WALK AMONGST THEE THIS DAY OF DAYS!

THOR-- LORD OF THE LIVING LIGHTNING AND HEIR TO THE THRONE OF ETERNAL ASGARD!

*YET, IN REVELING OVER HIS RESTORED MJOLNIR-- EVEN A THUNDER GOD CAN **MISS** A DETAIL OR TWO.*

THUS, THE FOLLOWING SECOND--

NOW, WE SHALL HAVE THE *TRUE AND FINAL TEST*, THOR-- MY POWER, AGAINST YOURS!

THE VERY *PLANET* ITSELF DOTH STAND IN PERIL MOST DIRE, FROM THE WORLD-SPANNING HANDS OF THE *CELESTIALS*--

--AND THOU ART STILL CONSUMED WITH PASSION FOR THE *WRESTLING RING*-- AYE, E'EN 'GAINST MERE *MORTALS* THOU CANST EASILY DEFEAT! *WHY?*

WHAM!

¿POR QUE NO?*

LIKE ALL *DEVIANTS*, *MI AMIGO*, I HAVE LIVED *MANY YEARS*.

LIFE CAN BECOME *BORING* AFTER SO MANY MILLENNIA...

*"WHY NOT?"--R.

...AND ONE MUST HAVE AN *AFICIÓN*,* NO?

:UHNN!:

THRAK!

*HOBBY. --R.

MY ORDERS FROM BROTHER TODE WERE TO *DEFEAT* VAMPIRO--*HUMILIATE* HIM BEFORE MORTALS, IF NOT TOTALLY SMASH HIM.

THAT I *DID*-- FOR HIS POWERS WERE ALWAYS BORN OF *SKILL*, NOT PURE STRENGTH ALONE.

BUT, YOU *SAVED* HIM-- YOU INTERFERED-- AND NOW I SHALL LEARN IF AN *ASGARDIAN* MAY PERISH!

NOT-- AT *THINE* HANDS-- VILLAIN--!

NAY, NOT AT THINE HANDS!

¡MADRE DE MERCED!

THPONG!

<WHAT KIND OF FIGHT IS THIS-- WITHOUT A REFEREE?>

<I DECLARE THIS MATCH OVER, DO YOU HEAR? OVER!!>

INSIDE THE RING, HOWEVER, THE COMBATANTS ARE FAR FROM WILLING TO DESIST...

YOU HAVE *DEFAMED* ME-- WIPED OUT THE HUMAN MOB'S MEMORY OF MY DEFEAT OF *VAMPIRO*-- EVEN OF *EL HALCON D'ORO*.

BUT, THE MORTAL CROWD SHALL LONG REMEMBER THE DAY--

-- WHEN *THOR HIMSELF* WAS SLAIN IN THE RING-- BY *EL TORO ROJO!*

NO MAN MAY *REMEMBER*, TORO...

...WHAT NE'ER HATH *HAPPENED!*

¡AAAGK!

RAKK!

YOU ARE-- *FAST*, THUNDERER-- PERHAPS AS FAST AS *EL TORO ROJO*.

BUT-- I HAVE STILL *ONE FINAL CHARGE* LEFT WITHIN ME.

MAKE IT, THEN-- THAT THIS FARCE MIGHT *END!*

AS YOU WISH! AND DO NOT THINK YOUR PRECIOUS *MALLET* WILL PROTECT YOU-- FROM BEING *GORED* AS VAMPIRO WAS!

I USE MY WHIRLING HAMMER *NOT* AS A SHIELD, MERELY--

--BUT FOR QUITE *ANOTHER* PURPOSE!

¿*QUE DIABLO*--?

BZZZZZ

M-MY HORNS! YOU HAVE *DESTROYED* THEM-- SHEARED THEM AWAY!!

WITHOUT THEM-- MY POWER IS *HALVED!*

I DID *SUSPECT* AS MUCH!

UNLESS THOU HADST SOME *SPECIAL* SOURCE OF POWER, THOU COULDST NE'ER HAVE STOOD AGAINST ME MORE STRONGLY THAN E'ER DID THY *FELLOW* DEVIANTS.

SHORN OF THEM, THOU ART A *DEVIANT* STILL-- POSSESSED OF MORE THAN *MORTAL* MIGHT, BY FAR--

--BUT WHAT IS *THAT*, AGAINST THE *POWER OF THOR*?

SHR KK

THEN, WHILE THE STILL-UNCOMPREHENDING THRONG ROARS BELOW--

<--AND THE WINNER IS--UHHH-->

AS I HAVE SAID: MY NAME BE *THOR*, AMIGO.

HARD AS I DID STRIKE EL TORO ROJO, HE'LL BE NO THREAT TILL VAMPIRO BE *LONG DEPARTED*... AND I, AS WELL.

STILL, I SHALL LOOK IN AGAIN ON *BOTH* OF THEM, AS SOON AS--

--AND WE SHALL MAKE *MILLIONS* TOGETHER!

¡*MAGNIFICO, MAGNIFICO!* SIGN THIS *CONTRACT*, MY FRIEND--

I DO PREFER TO *SAVE* MILLIONS, NOT TO *EARN* THEM.

STAND THEE ASIDE!

THEN, A FIERCELY-HURLED URU HAMMER-- AND THE GOD OF THUNDER IS STREAKING NORTHEAST-WARD ACROSS THE NIGHT-TIME SKY...

I MUST HIE ME BACK AT ONCE TO *OLYMPIA*-- THERE TO PREVENT *ZURAS* FROM LEADING HIS ETERNALS AGAINST THE *SPACE GODS*.

ELSE, THE *JUDGMENT OF THE CELESTIALS* MAY BE LEVIED UPON THE EARTH *AT ONCE*--

--AND THE PLANET ENTIRE BE *DESTROYED!*

NEXT: *ZURAS, ZEUS, AND ALL-FATHER ODIN-- AGAINST THOR ALONE!*

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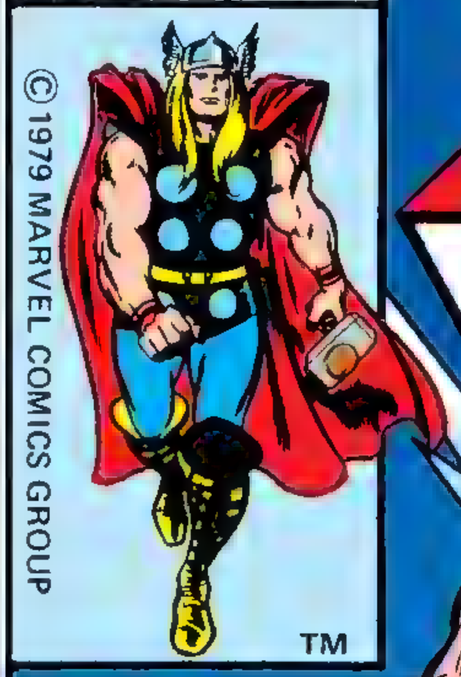

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THUNDER OVER TROY!

ALL-NEW!

THOR vs. ZEUS

IN THE MIDST OF THE TROJAN WAR!

POLLARD/LAYTON

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY THOR!®

THUNDER OVER TROY!

DEATH! DEATH TO THE INTERLOPERS FROM HATED ASGARD!!

RAGE AS THOU *WILT*, STORM-GIANT-- BUT DO SO *SWIFTLY!*

THE *HAMMER OF THOR* SHALL STILL THINE ARROGANT TONGUE, SOON ENOW!

Fourteen years ago, the first Thor Annual told the soul-staggering saga of the thunder god's first battle with *Hercules*, mightiest Graeco-Roman demi-god. And now--

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--to bring you perhaps the most titanic of all tales of the ***clash of Gods***--from the age-forgotten days when eternal Asgard was young, and the immortal son of Odin was younger still--! *So Be It!*

LG550

WITH SPECIAL THANKS FOR RESEARCH AND A PLOTTING ASSIST TO **DON & MAGGIE THOMPSON**

'TIS *THY* PALE LIPS THAT SHALL BE SEALED FIRST, THUNDER GOD--

AND WHERE THOU DOST FALL, CAN WEAKER *LOKI* LONG HOPE TO STAND?

TREACHER-OUS *BRUTE!*

KRAK!

ONLY BY THE WHIMS OF *CHANCE* DID WE STRAY 'PON THE BARREN WASTES OF *JOTUNHEIM*, LAND OF GIANTS-- NOR DID WE MEAN YE HARM-- *T'LL NOW!*

FOR, I DO SWEAR IT BY *ALL-FATHER ODIN*-- IF YE WILL NOT LET US PASS BY IN *PEACE*--

--*THEN WE SHALL DO SO UPON THE WINDS OF WAR!*

KROOM!

YMIR'S SACRED COW! THIS YOUNG GODLING BE FAR MIGHTIER, E'EN, THAN WE HAVE REMEMBERED FROM TIMES PAST!

AYE! SURELY THE *POWER OF ODIN* HIMSELF BE MANIFEST IN HIS FURIOUS *HAMMER!*

LOKI! COME! THEY HAVE LEARNED ENOW THIS DAY TO LET US DEPART WITHOUT FURTHER BATTLE.

AFTER THOU HAST COVERED *THYSELF* IN GLORY, I SEE!

NAY, THOR-- LOKI, TOO, MUST HAVE HIS *DUE!*

THOU SHALT HAVE *THY* DUE, TRICKSTER, WHEN THOU ART CHAINED FOR ALL TIME-- AS FORETOLD IN THE *PROPHECIES OF VOLLA.*

BUT MEANTIME, I CANNOT LET E'EN MINE UNWORTHY *ADOPTED BROTHER* SUFFER HURT AT THE HANDS OF STORM-GIANTS-- *AND SO--!*

SHROOSH

SO, DEAR "BROTHER"-- ONCE AGAIN THOU HAST *ROBBED* ME OF THE LAURELS OF COMBAT.

WELL? HAST THOU *NAUGHT* TO SAY FOR THYSELF?

NAY, VAIN-GLORIOUS ONE.

RATHER, I STAND RECALLING AN *EARLIER* TIME WE STOOD 'PON THIS VERY SPOT...

...FROM WHENCE I DID *FALL* UNBIDDEN THROUGH A CREVICE WHICH LED, TO MY SURPRISE, TO ANCIENT, TIME-DEFYING *OLYMPUS* BEYOND.

THERE, I DID CLOSE IN BATTLE WITH VALIANT, HEADSTRONG *HERCULES*, HALF-HUMAN SON OF DIVINE *ZEUS* HIMSELF.

I REMEMBER, TOO, HOW ZEUS LATER DID *SEAL OFF* THAT HIDDEN ENTRANCE... TO KEEP *SEPARATE* THE SPHERES OF OLYMPUS AND ASGARD.*

*ANNUAL*1, 1965. --ROY.

LOKI, THOUGH HE RODE WITH ME THAT FATEFUL DAY, SAW *LITTLE* OF WHAT DID TRANSPIRE... AND UNDERSTOOD E'EN *LESS*.

DOUBTLESS, 'TIS BETTER THAT WAY.

COME, MISCHIEF-MAKER. LET US--

HOLD! LOOK THEE-- THAT YAWNING *FISSURE*--!

EH?

'TIS OF NO IMPORT. *COME*, I SAY.

NAY, IT DOTH INTRIGUE ME... FOR, WITHIN, IT SEEMS TO FADE *DOWN-WARD* INTO PITCH DARK-NESS... LEADING *WHITHER*?

HOLD!

A MOMENT LATER, LOKI HAS DIS-APPEARED INSIDE...

...AND A CHAGRINED THUNDER GOD FOLLOWS AFTER... OR AT LEAST ***ATTEMPTS*** TO.

BY HEIMDAL'S HORN! THE SCOUNDREL HATH ***VANISHED*** ENTIRE!

IF THIS FISSURE DOTH LEAD, LIKE THAT EARLIER ONE, TO ETERNAL ***OLYMPUS***-- WHO CAN SAY WHAT VILE ***MISCHIEF*** LOKI MIGHT CAUSE THERE?

YET, THERE BE AS MANY ***TUNNELS*** BRANCHING OFF HEREIN AS FLEET SLEIPNIR HATH LEGS!

MAYHAP NOT ALL... MAYHAP ***NONE*** OF THEM DOTH LEAD TO THE FAIR DOMAIN OF THE GRAECO-ROMAN GODS.

I'LL TRY BUT ***ONE*** OF THEM IN SEARCH OF LOKI.

IF I FIND HIM NOT THIS WAY, TO ***ZEUS'*** TENDER MERCIES SHALL I LEAVE HIM!

EH? WHAT CLAMMY, CLOYING ***MIST*** BE THIS, THROUGH WHICH I NEEDS MUST TREAD?

IT DOTH SEEM TO ENTER E'EN INTO MY VERY ***BRAIN***, AS IF--

AH! AN OPENING YONDER-- THROUGH WHICH ***SUNLIGHT*** OF A SORT DOTH GLEAM!

IN SOOTH, I HAVE ***EMERGED*** FROM THOSE TORTUOUS CAVERNS, INTO A BRIGHT ***FOREST***-- YET I DO SEE NO SIGN OF-- OF--

OF ***WHOM***?? WHOM DID I ***SEEK*** AMID THOSE CORRIDORS OF STONE?

FROM WHAT ***LAND*** DID I COME, SO SHORT A TIME AGONE? ITS VERY ***NAME*** DOTH NOW ESCAPE ME...

...AS DOTH-- THE GODS HELP ME!-- ***MINE OWN!***

VERILY, ***ALL MEMORY*** DOTH SEEM TO HAVE FLED ME--OR ELSE BEEN PUT TO SLEEP BY THAT ACCURSED ***MIST.***

I'VE A ***NAME***, SURELY-- BUT WHAT CAN IT ***BE***?

GRONNK

WELL, A MOMENT IN THIS COOL FOREST ***GLADE***, AND I KNOW I SHALL-- ***WHAT***?

SOME SORT OF LOUD ***GRUNTING***-- AS FROM A ***BEAST*** OF CONSIDERABLE SIZE!

'TWAS THE SOUND OF AN ANIMAL IN ***PAIN***-- MAYHAP E'EN DRIVEN ***MAD*** WITH HURT.

BEST I SHOULD SEEK IT OUT, WHILE MY BRAIN DOTH CLEAR AND I STRIVE TO RECALL MY NAME... MY VERY ***IDENTITY.***

FROM JUST BEYOND THIS ***GROVE*** DID IT COME...

...AND I WOULD SEE WHAT-- HOLD!

YON DARK-HAIRED YOUTH DOTH FACE THE CHARGE OF A WILD BOAR OF GARGANTUAN SIZE.

MESEEMS HE HATH WOUNDED IT, ONLY TO BE SLAIN BY IT, IN TURN--

GROWK

--UNLESS I DO ACT!

THUS DO INSTINCTS RULE US ALL... AYE, EVEN THOSE AMONG US WHO MAY BE DIVINE BEINGS FORGETFUL OF OUR BIRTH...

AND, THOUGH HE KNOWS NOT WHO HE MAY BE OR WHENCE HE IS COME, THE SON OF ODIN NOW LEAPS HEADLONG UPON THE NECK OF THE RAMPAGING BOAR.

UNHH--!

DOUBTLESS HE SCARCELY REALIZES HE HOLDS ANY HAMMER IN HAND, LET ALONE THAT IT IS MAGNIFICENT MJOLNIR, FORGED BY GEIRRODUR THE TROLL.

STILL, NEXT INSTANT, THAT HAMMER STRIKES.

MORE: IT SLAYS.

NOW THOU ART SAFE, MY FRIEND.

BUT, WHEN NEXT THOU GOEST A-HUNTING...

THRAAM!

...MAKE CERTAIN 'TIS NOT THE BEAST WHICH DOTH CARRY HOME THE PRIZE!

ZEUS!

ZEUS?! THAT NAME DOTH HAVE A RING FAMILIAR.

BE IT THINE, MAYHAP...OR E'EN MINE OWN?

HAH! SURELY YOU JEST, BLONDHAIR...YOU WHOSE MODE OF SPEECH IS AS STRANGE AS YOUR ARMOR.

ZEUS IS KING OF ALL THE GODS.

I KNOW WHO YOU ARE, BUT I AM AENEAS, ALLY OF PRIAM, KING OF ILLIUM... ALSO CALLED TROY.

SO MANY NAMES... AND I HAVE NONE.

NONE? YET, BY YOUR GOLDEN LOCKS, I'D THINK YOU A *HYPER-BOREAN*--ONE OF THOSE WHO DWELL BEYOND THE NORTH WIND.

MAYHAP. I KNOW NOT.

WE'LL TALK OF IT LATER. WILL YOU HELP ME CARVE UP THE BOAR?

WHY *CARVE* IT, AENEAS...

...WHEN I CAN CARRY IT *THUS*?

BY *APHRODITE*, THE GODDESS WHO BORE ME!*

EH? THY PARENTS BE *GODS*, DIDST THOU SAY?

*APHRODITE (ROMAN NAME: VENUS).--*ROY.*

ONLY MY *MOTHER*, TRUE GODDESS OF LOVE AND BEAUTY! MY FATHER, NOW GROWN OLD, IS *ANCHISES*, KING OF DARDANUS.

HE'S ONE OF TROY'S *ALLIES*, AND AWAITS ME WITHIN THE CITY'S WALLS.

THY PARENTAGE DOTH STRIKE *LIKEWISE* A FAMILIAR NOTE WITHIN MY BREAST... I KNOW NOT WHY.

BUT-- WHY DOTH THIS TROY NEED *ALLIED KINGS* TO DWELL WITHIN ITS WALLS?

YOU *MUST* COME FROM AFAR, BARBARIAN... IF YOU KNOW NOT OF THE *SIEGE-WAR* WHICH THE HATED *ARGIVES** HAVE WAGED FOR NEARLY NINE YEARS AGAINST TROY.

'PON MY WORD, FRIEND, I'VE NE'ER HEARD OF EITHER TROY *OR* THE ARGIVES, SO FAR AS I MAY RECALL.

IT'S A *STRANGE* TALE...

**ARGIVES* (FROM THE WORD "ARGOS") = ANCIENT NAME FOR THE *GREEKS*.--R.T.

"...ONE WHICH BEGAN YEARS AGO, WHEN MANY *ARGIVE PRINCES* DID SUE FOR THE HAND OF THE BEAUTEOUS *HELEN*, DAUGHTER OF TYNDAREUS.

"HER WILY *SIRE*, FEARING CIVIL WAR, PREVAILED UPON ALL THE PRINCES TO SWEAR *LOYALTY* TO WHOMEVER AMONGST THEM HELEN SHOULD CHOOSE FOR HER *MATE*.

"THIS DONE, SHE CHOSE *MENELAUS*, GRIM KING OF *SPARTA*.

"THEN, ONE DAY, THERE CAME A VISITOR TO SPARTA'S COURT: *PARIS*, SON OF PRIAM WHO REIGNS IN TROY.

"HE SPOKE IN HONEYED WORDS...

"BUT, UNKNOWN TO MENELAUS, MY *MOTHER* HAD PROMISED HELEN TO *PARIS*, FOR TAKING HER SIDE YEARS BEFORE IN A QUARREL 'TWIXT HER AND TWO OTHER GODDESSES OF OLYMPUS.

"THUS, WHEN MENELAUS WAS CALLED AWAY, MY MOTHER CAUSED HELEN TO BECOME *SMITTEN* WITH THE YOUNG PRINCE...

"...AND PARIS BORE HER--AND HER RICH *DOWRY* TO MENELAUS-- BACK TO *TROY*.

"THEN DID THE MIGHTIEST OF THE *ARGIVES* AGREE TO FULFILL THEIR OATH OF LOYALTY TO BETRAYED MENELAUS:

"CRAFTY *ODYSSEUS*, FROM ITHACA...

"FIERCE *ACHILLES*, SAID TO BE IMMUNE TO HARM...

"*AGAMEMNON*, BROTHER TO MENELAUS AND *HIGH KING* OF THE ARGIVES...

"...AND *DIOMEDES* OF ARGOS... AMONG OTHERS.

"UNDER AGAMEMNON'S LEADERSHIP, THEY SET SAIL FOR AULIS...SHIPS A *THOUSAND STRONG*, LAUNCHED BY ONE UNFORGETTABLE *FACE*...

"...THOUGH FEW WOULD DENY ITS *PLUNDER*, FULL AS MUCH AS HELEN, THEY WANT HERE IN THE EAST.

"AT LAST THEY LANDED UPON THESE SHORES...

"...AND STOOD AWED BEFORE HIGH, WINDY *TROY!*

"...WITH MANY *BATTLES*, BUT WITH NEITHER SIDE EVER ABLE TOTALLY TO VANQUISH THE OTHER.

"NIGH *NINE YEARS* HAS THIS BITTER WAR CONTINUED...

"TROY *MIGHT* HAVE FALLEN, ALONE... BUT WE, HER ALLIES, WERE LOATH TO SEE THE ARGIVES GAIN A *FOOTHOLD* IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD.

"IN TIME, THE ARGIVES, DESPAIRING OF A QUICK VICTORY, BUILT *WOODEN WALLS* BEFORE THEIR SHIPS...AND SETTLED DOWN TO A LONG *SIEGE*.

"THERE ARE *TOO FEW* ARGIVES, HOWEVER, TRULY TO SURROUND THE CITY--HENCE MY *HUNTING TRIP*, WHEREON YOU DID FIND ME, GOLD-HAIR.

"NO ONE KNOWS WHAT THE FINAL *OUTCOME* WILL BE OF THIS WAR, OF COURSE...

"...THOUGH *CASSANDRA*, A DAUGHTER OF KING PRIAM, SAYS SHE HAS SEEN TROY *BURNING* IN CRIMSON NIGHTMARES.

"BUT, IT'S SAID SHE WAS DRIVEN MAD BY THE GOD *APOLLO* FOR REFUSING HIS FAVORS...SO NO ONE BELIEVES HER.

"MEANWHILE, WE MUST THANK THE GODS FOR *HECTOR*, MOST VALIANT OF PRIAM'S MANY SONS...

"...FOR KEEPING THE ARGIVE WOLVES AT *BAY!*

"OF LATE, *HOPE* SPRINGS UP IN TROY, FOR OUR SPIES TELL US THE FEARSOME *ACHILLES* HAS QUARRELED WITH HIGH KING *AGAMEMNON*...

"...AND HAS RETIRED WITH HIS TROOPS TO HIS *SHIPS*, REFUSING TO FIGHT ANY MORE."

I'D HOPED TO SEE HECTOR *SLAY* ACHILLES ONE DAY, FOR THEN THE ARGIVES WOULD SURE LOSE HEART AND GO HOME.

BUT PERHAPS, IF ONE OF *YOUR* MIGHT WOULD JOIN OUR CAUSE--

NOT *YET*, AENEAS...

FOR, I KNOW NOT E'EN WHO I *AM*, THOUGH I FEEL THE *IRON CHAINS* ON MY MEMORY *BREAKING* SLOWLY, ONE BY ONE.

GOOD ENOUGH! I CAN ASK NO MORE, AT PRESENT.

MEANWHILE, WE NEAR THE *SECRET TUNNEL* WHICH WILL TAKE US BOTH INSIDE TROY'S WALLS.

SOON...

AENEAS! BY THE GODS-- *WHO*--?

CALL HIM SIMPLY *NO-NAME*, TROJAN...TILL HE RECALLS HIS OWN.

SLAVES! ROLL THE *BOULDER* BACK OVER THE TUNNEL'S ENTRANCE, IN CASE SOME THIEVING *ARGIVE* SAW US ENTER!

WHAT NEWS OF THE *WAR*, IF ANY?

WHY, KNOW YOU *NOT*, MASTER AENEAS?

PRINCE PARIS AND VILE *MENELAUS* ARE ABOUT TO FIGHT IN *SINGLE COMBAT* TO DECIDE HELEN'S FATE... AND TROY'S.

THANKS BE TO MY MOTHER THAT I RETURNED IN TIME TO *SEE* IT!

COME, MY FRIEND! THIS COULD BE A DAY TO BE *SUNG* DOWN THROUGH THE AGES.

I HOPE THEN, FOR THY SAKE, IT BE A *HAPPY* SONG, YOUNG PRINCE.

WE'LL FIND A GOOD *VANTAGE POINT*, AND--

EH? WHAT'S CAUGHT YOUR *EYE*, NO-NAME?

YONDER *WOMAN*, WITH HAIR AS GOLDEN AS MINE OWN-- STANDING UPON THE RAMPARTS.

BE SHE THE ONE I SUPPOSE?

AYE...

"THAT IS INDEED *HELEN* WHO STANDS WITH KING PRIAM, POOR CASSANDRA, AND TROY'S ELDER COUNCILORS... HELEN, WHOSE BEAUTY, THEY SAY, IS THE EARTHLY COUNTERPART OF MY *MOTHER'S*.

"FOR THAT REASON, MOST TROJANS HOLD HER *BLAMELESS* OF THE CITY'S WOES... MOST, BUT NOT *ALL*.

"*WAIT!* THERE STANDS *PARIS*--AND NEAR HIM *HECTOR*--!"

IF *FALL* YOU MUST, PARIS, TRY TO DO SO *BRAVELY*, THAT YOU DISGRACE NOT YOUR CITY... AND OUR FATHER!

YOU WORRY NEEDLESSLY, MY BROTHER.

I'LL *NOT* FALL!

"AND THERE, FARTHER OFF, IS *MENELAUS*, FLANKED BY SCHEMING *ODYSSEUS*.

"*PARIS*, IT SEEMS, HAS WON THE RIGHT TO THROW THE *FIRST SPEAR*."

THE BATTLE *BEGINS*, THEN?

AYE. IF PARIS' SPEAR STRIKES MENELAUS' GREEDY HEART, OR EVEN *WOUNDS* HIM SEVERELY...

...I'LL BE BACK IN *DARDANUS* ERE WINTER COMES!

THEN, EVEN AS AENEAS SPEAKS--

--THE TROJAN PRINCE HURLS HIS JAVELIN AT SPARTA'S MONARCH!

MAY APHRODITE GUIDE MY HAND!

BUT, ALAS FOR PARIS, THE LOVE-GODDESS DOES NOT.

NOR, DESPITE MENELAUS' ARDENT PRAYER TO MIGHTY ZEUS, DOES THE ARGIVE'S SPEAR STRIKE MORE TRULY...

IT SEEMS, SPARTAN, THE GODS FAVOR NEITHER OF US THIS DAY!

IF THE GODS FAIL ME, THEN--

--MENELAUS WILL TRUST ONLY HIS OWN SWIFT SWORD!

ONCE, TWICE THE BEARDED KING SWINGS HIS WEAPON, CARRYING THE YOUNGER MAN BEFORE HIM--

--AT LAST SMITING PARIS' HELMET SO HARD THAT HIS SWORD-BLADE SNAPS IN FOUR PLACES!

UNNNH--!

A FINE HORSE-HAIR CREST YOU HAVE UPON YOUR HELMET, HATED PRINCE--

--THE BETTER TO DRAG YOU THROUGH THE DUST, AND BACK TO THE ARGIVE LINES!

THEN WE'LL SEE HOW LONG FAIR HELEN STAYS WITHIN TROY'S THICK WALLS!

APHRODITE-- IF EVER I SERVED YOU WELL--SAVE ME NOW--!

WHY DOST THOU *SMILE*, AENEAS, WHEN THY CHAMPION IS FELLED AND DRAGGED HELPLESS TOWARD THE RANKS OF THINE ENEMIES?

TROY'S CHAMPION AND *TROY'S* ENEMIES, MY FRIEND... NOT *MINE*.

WITH PARIS DEFEATED, THE ARGIVES WILL RETURN *HOME* WITH THEIR QUEEN... WHICH IS ALL TROY'S *ALLIES* CARE ABOUT.

THEN I DO REJOICE FOR THEE, THAT-- *HOLD!*

WHAT VISION OF *UNTOLD LOVELINESS* BE THIS, WHICH DOTH SWOOP BIRDLIKE FROM OUT THE VERY CLOUDS?

IT'S-- MY *MOTHER*-- THE GODDESS *APHRODITE*-- WHOM ONLY I AND MY FATHER, OF ALL THE MEN I KNOW, HAVE THE POWER TO *SEE*.

THEN, HOW CAN *YOU*--?

THE QUESTION HANGS HEAVY IN THE AIR...

...AS THE GODDESS, UNSEEN BY ANY NOT OF DIVINE BIRTH, BREAKS THE CHIN-STRAP WHICH IS ALL BUT STRANGLING THE PRINCE OF TROY.

*IF MENELAUS DOTH DESIRE THINE HELMET, DEAR PARIS, LET HIM **HAVE** IT... AND IT **ALONE**!*

WHAT *GODS' TREACHERY* IS THIS??

THE HELMET CAME OFF IN MY *HANDS!*

WELL, THEN, MY *SPEAR* WILL PURCHASE MY REVENGE!

*YET, ON THE INSTANT, **PARIS** IS RENDERED AS INVISIBLE AS **APHRODITE** HERSELF...*

*THUS DOTH THE **GODDESS OF LOVE** REPAY HIM WHO CHOSE HER FAIREST OF ALL, O'ER **HERA** AND **ATHENA**!*

SORCERY! THE TROJAN DOG HAS *VANISHED!*

ALREADY, DAZED PARIS DOTH REST SAFE *WITHIN* TROY'S WALLS.

I SEE THAT... BUT HOW DO *YOU*?

WHO *ARE* YOU, MAN OF THE NORTH? SOME *DEMI-GOD*, SURELY...!

I BEGIN TO SUSPECT... YOU SPEAK THE *TRUTH*.

JUST THEN, AGAMEMNON DRAWS NEAR THE WALLS...

TROJANS! I DECLARE MY BROTHER THE WINNER OF THE BATTLE!

SURRENDER HELEN AND HER FORTUNE, AS PROMISED--

--AND PAY US THE FULL COST OF THIS LONG AND BITTER WAR!

IT WAS NO TRUE VICTORY, O PRIAM. PARIS MIGHT YET HAVE--

NO, COUNCILOR. I KNOW, FULL WELL AS AGAMEMNON, THAT PARIS WAS DEFEATED.

A MOMENT, ARGIVE, AND WE SHALL MAKE THEE AN OFFER OF INDEMNITY, THAT PEACE MAY REIGN BETWEEN US AGAIN!

AND ONLY CASSANDRA, BELIEVED BY NONE, KNOWS THAT SUCH WILL NEVER COME TO PASS.

WHILE, IN A SHADOWED CORNER WHERE LOVELY HELEN HAS GONE, THAT SHE MIGHT NOT SEE HER BELOVED SLAIN BY HER HUSBAND'S HAND...

MILADY-- YOUR PARIS AWAITS YOU, WITHIN YOUR CHAMBERS--!

AND, IN SPITE OF HERSELF, HELEN GOES TO HIM...

...EVEN AS APHRODITE DEPARTS TROY'S RAMPARTS.

THEN TELL ME, MY FRIEND!

ARE YOU, LIKE MYSELF, A MORTAL WHO IS A GOD'S OFFSPRING?

NOW DO I KNOW AT LAST-- WHO I AM!

NAY, FAR MORE THAN THAT, AENEAS.

IN SOOTH, I BE THOR--SON OF ODIN, AND SCION OF ETERNAL ASGARD!

THOR? ODIN? ASGARD? I... KNOW NOT THESE NAMES.

NO WONDER IN THAT-- FOR THEY DOUBTLESS EXIST NOT, IN THIS DAY AND EON.

METHINKS I DID BYPASS TIME ITSELF AMID THOSE MISTY CAVERNS WHICH ROBBED MY MEMORY.

BUT NOW, I BE THOR AGAIN!

THOR, GOD OF THUNDER!

THEN, AS AENEAS AND THE GATHERED TROJANS SCATTER LIKE CHAFF BEFORE NORTHERN STORM-WINDS...

...THE MIGHTY ASGARDIAN TAKES TO THE SKIES, AND IS SWIFTLY LOST FROM HUMAN SIGHT.

BUT, THE GODDESS APHRODITE IS NOT LOST TO HIS, AS HE FOLLOWS HER UNNOTICED...

...TOWARD THE SHIMMERING SPIRES OF OLYMPUS ITSELF!

AS, ON THE PLAIN BELOW...

THINK YOU THE TROJANS WILL KEEP THEIR WORD, MY BROTHER?

I ALMOST HOPE THEY DO NOT, MENELAUS. FOR, WHAT TREASURE COULD THEY POSSIBLY GIVE US--

--THAT WE'D NOT HAVE FOR OURSELVES, IF TROY WERE RAZED TO THE GROUND?

MEANWHILE, AMID PILLARED BOWERS WHICH CO-EXIST WITH THE EARTHLY MOUNT OLYMPUS, AND YET ON ANOTHER DIMENSIONAL PLANE AT THE SELFSAME TIME...

WELL? ART THOU SATISFIED NOW, HERA, MY WIFE?

THE TROJANS ARE DISGRACED... THEY'LL LOSE BOTH HELEN AND MUCH GOLD.

THAT BE NAUGHT, MILORD ZEUS! TROY MUST BE DESTROYED, TILL NOT A STONE DOTH STAND!

ONLY THEN WILL BE AVENGED THE INSULT WHICH PARIS DID TO ATHENA AND ME!

ALL HE DID, WOMAN-- AND THAT, YEARS AGO-- WAS TO RENDER JUDGMENT THAT APHRODITE WAS THE FAIREST OF YE THREE...

...WHICH OUGHT SHE NOT TO BE, BEING GODDESS OF BEAUTY?

BUT, HERE DOTH COME THE OFFENDING ONE NOW...

APHRODITE, DAUGHTER! THOU HAST DISOBEYED MY COMMAND THAT NO OLYMPIAN MUST INTERFERE IN THIS WAR!

FORGIVE ME, FATHER, BUT I COULD NOT BEAR TO SEE FAIR PARIS SLAIN.

BESIDES, DID NOT MY SISTER ATHENA INTERFERE NOT LONG AGO, WHEN SHE STOPPED ACHILLES FROM SLAYING AGAMEMNON? SHE--

SILENCE! 'TIS NOT FOR E'EN THE LIKES OF THEE TO QUESTION THE DECREES OF THE LORD OF HEAVEN AND EARTH!

BEWARE, DAUGHTER-- LEST I TAKE FROM THEE THY BEAUTY, AND LEAVE THEE TO PREEN BEFORE TOADS!

ZZ RAK

ACROSS THE LEAGUES HURTLES THE THUNDERBOLT OF ZEUS--

THRA-

KOOOM!

--TO REDUCE A DISTANT MOUNTAIN PEAK TO SHARDS OF DUST AND ROCK.

BY THE HARROWING HORN OF HEIMDALL!

NOT E'EN MINE OWN MJOLNIR COULD HAVE DONE GREATER DAMAGE!

SO!

I KNOW THEE, SCION OF ASGARD--AN INTRUDER IN THIS REALM!

IF THOU ART COME HITHER TO FAVOR ONE SIDE OR THE OTHER IN THE WAR BELOW--THOU SHALT RECKON WITH ZEUS!

I'VE NO QUARREL WITH THEE, MILORD... THOUGH THOR OBEYS NO DICTATES SAVE HIS OWN.

'TWAS BUT CURIOSITY BROUGHT ME HERE...NAUGHT MORE.

ONE THERE IS, HOWEVER, WHO HAS NO CURIOSITY TO HEAR THE WORDS OF THE TWO GODS: ATHENA, BATTLE GODDESS WHO SOMETIMES COUNCILS WISDOM... SOMETIMES WAR.

WHILST THEY PRATTLE, THE WAR BELOW MAY WELL END...AND HERA AND I WILL NOT SEE TROY DOOMED, AS WE WISH.

YET, AS SURELY AS I HELD BACK ACHILLES' HAND NOT LONG AGO, WITH THE VOICE OF REASON...

...SO CAN I CAUSE ANOTHER TO RAISE HIS HAND, WITH A VOICE OF QUITE A DIFFERENT KIND.

HO, PANDARUS--GREAT WARRIOR OUT OF DISTANT LYCIA--!

WHO--? I HEAR A VOICE--LIKE THAT OF ONE OF PRIAM'S SONS, WHOM I SEE NOT.

YET, SOMEHOW, I KNOW IT IS NO MAN'S VOICE I HEAR, BUT THAT OF ONE OF THE IMMORTAL GODS.

THOU ART WISE BEYOND THY YEARS, AS THOU ART SKILLED WITH A BOW.

TAKE MINE ADVICE, THEN, AND SKEWER MENELAUS WHILE HE STANDS THUS IN THE OPEN!

KILL HIM, AND THOU SHALT EARN UNDYING GLORY...

NOR SHALL PARIS HIMSELF FORGET THEE, WHEN HE BE RECOVERED!

THE GODS, IT'S SAID, HEAR THOSE WHO LISTEN TO THEM...!

GUIDE MY HAND, UNSEEN SPIRIT-- AND I'LL OFFER UP A GREAT SACRIFICE WHEN I RETURN TO MY HOMELAND!

I SHALL SAVE MENELAUS, AT THE LAST MOMENT-- BUT THERE WILL BE WAR ONCE AGAIN BETWEEN ARGOS AND HATEFUL TROY!

JUST THEN, FAR DISTANT AS A STAR, YET NEAR AS A HEART-BEAT--

'TIS A MATTER 'TWIXT US OF OLYMPUS, ASGARDIAN. BEST THOU SHOULD RETURN TO THINE OWN PLACE AND TIME.

TIME!? THEN I WAS RIPPED UNTIMELY FROM MINE OWN ERA, AS I DID SUSPECT!

BUT HOLD, MILORD ZEUS! SEE WHAT DOTH TRANSPIRE ON YONDER BATTLEFIELD!

IT DOTH OFFEND MINE EYES, TO BEHOLD SUCH BASE BETRAYAL-- BY GOD OR MAN.

HEAR ME, MJOLNIR! LET WHIRLWINDS RISE, 'PON THE INSTANT--

--WINDS NO MERE MANMADE SHAFT MAY DEFY!

BY THE HECATOMBS OF HERCULES!

AN ARROW! IT MERELY GRAZED ME-- DEFLECTED BY MY BELT!

HEAR MY WORDS, YE TREACHEROUS MEN OF TROY!

FOR SUCH A COWARDLY ACT, OUR TRUCE IS DECLARED AT AN END!

WE'LL NOT BARGAIN NOW, WHILE STONE REMAINS ON TROJAN STONE!

AS YOU WILL, JACKAL OF SPARTA!

WE REGRET THE WAY THE TRUCE WAS BROKEN--

BUT, BY THE GODS, WE'LL TEACH YOU TROJANS WE CAN FIGHT FACE TO FACE, AS WELL!

"BY THE GODS!"

WORDS FIRST UTTERED, PERHAPS ON THAT PRIMORDIAL DAY WHEN A DEVOUT **PRIEST**, OFFERING UP HIS ALTAR-ANIMAL TO HIS GODS, FIRST SLEW AN **INTRUDER** WITH A THIGHBONE HE'D MEANT TO SACRIFICE, INSTEAD!

"IT'S THE GODS' WILL," IT'S SAID... BUT WHO HEARD THEM SPEAK THEIR WILL?

ARE THE GODS **ALWAYS** AS WARLIKE AS THOSE WHICH LOOK DOWN ON ARGIVE AND TROJAN THIS DAY, THIRSTY FOR BLOOD...

OR IS THAT MERELY THE WAY **MEN** WISH TO IMAGINE THINGS?

CURSE MY HASTE! I SEE NOW THE GODDESS ATHENA *FAVORS* THE ARGIVES; THUS, SHE NE'ER TRULY MEANT FOR MENELAUS TO DIE.

SHE BUT WISHED TO *BREAK* THE TRUCE... AND *DID*, WITH MINE AID.

IN SOOTH, I BE *YOUNG* STILL, AND HAVE O'ERMUCH TO LEARN 'BOUT GODS WHO MAY BE MINE *ELDERS*.

PANDARUS! MOUNT MY CHARIOT, AND WE'LL ATTACK THE ARGIVES TOGETHER!

DONE, AENEAS.

YET, I SHOT *TRUE*. MY ARROW SHOULD HAVE--

YOUR SHAFT COULD NOT SLAY MENELAUS BECAUSE HE IS UNDER THE PROTECTION OF MORE GODS THAN ONLY *ONE*, IT SEEMS.

BUT, THESE TWO *MARES* OF DIVINE BREED WILL BRING YOUR STRONG *SWORDARM* CLOSER TO THE FRAY.

BETWEEN US, WE'LL SLAY ENOUGH ARGIVES TO SEND THE REST FLEEING BACK TO THEIR *SHIPS*!

THERE, PANDARUS! YONDER STANDS DIOMEDES, MIGHTIEST OF ARGIVES NOW THAT ACHILLES STANDS ASIDE FROM BATTLE.

STANDS NOT FOR LONG, DARDANIAN! MY SPEAR SHALL--

BE NOT AFRAID, CHARIOTEER! THE DOG'S WEAPONS CANNOT HARM ME.

A VOICE HAS WHISPERED IN MY EAR THAT ATHENA HERSELF PROTECTS ME!

ME TOO, I HOPE!

WHEN MY SPEAR STRIKES HOME, FELLOW, SEIZE PRINCE AENEAS' CHARIOT AND DRIVE IT TO OUR CAMP!

HIS MARES ARE OF HEAVENLY BREED, WORTH A SCORE OF MINE.

AAAA

PANDARUS!?

DIOMEDES' JAVELIN, GUIDED BY THE BATTLE-GODDESS, STRIKES PANDARUS BETWEEN THE EYES-- KILLING HIM OUTRIGHT.

IT WAS I WHO CARRIED YOU TO YOUR DEATH, LYCIAN--

AND, I'LL STAND GUARD OVER YOUR BODY, TILL HELP COMES!

HERE, AENEAS!

EVEN THE GODDESS-MOTHER I'VE HEARD THAT YOU BOAST ABOUT--

--CANNOT SAVE YOU FROM ONE WHOM MIGHTIER *ATHENA* FAVORS!

NOT EVEN **TWO** STRONG MEN OF LATER DAYS COULD LIFT AND HURL THE GREAT **BOULDER** WHICH ENRAGED DIOMEDES NOW FLINGS--

--AND STARTLED AENEAS **FALLS** WHERE STRUCK AT THE HIPBONE!

A-APHRODITE-- MOTHER--

HELP NOW YOUR SON-- OR I PERISH THIS DAY!

THEN, THE MAN OF DARDANUS SEES NO MORE...

...THOUGH *APHRODITE* STREAKS INVISIBLY DOWNWARD, ON THE INSTANT!

OH DEAREST SON-- FOR THE LOVE I DID BEAR THY *FATHER* ONCE, ERE HE GREW OLD AND WITHERED, I SHALL PROTECT THEE!

WHAT? IS THIS SOME *GODDESS* THAT APPEARS BEFORE ME-- MADE VISIBLE BY HER *LOVE*?

IT *IS!* IT'S *APHRODITE*-- NOR IS SHE A WARRIOR TO BE FEARED, LIKE VENGEFUL *ATHENA!*

STOP, MORTAL--!

BUT, DIOMEDES IS **WRATHFUL** BEYOND ALL CAUTION-- AND NEXT MOMENT, HIS SPEAR **WOUNDS** THE GODDESS' PALM JUST ABOVE THE WRIST...

AAAAAAHH--!

...SO THAT ICHOR, THE BLOOD OF THE GODS, FLOWS LIKE WATER!

DROPPING HER MORTAL OFFSPRING, APHRODITE FLEES WITH LIGHT SPEED TO THE WAR-GOD **ARES**, WHO SITS WATCHING THE BATTLE LIKE A **VULTURE**, FROM A NEARBY HILL...

ARES! THE ARGIVE *DIOMEDES*-- HE--

I *SAW*, FOOLISH ONE.

THOU HADST BETTER LEAVE WAR FOR *MALE* GODS, WHO KNOW WELL ITS WAYS!

MEANWHILE, DIOMEDES TOWERS OVER PAIN-WRACKED AENEAS...

MY MAN HAS YOUR *CHARIOT*, PRINCE OF FOOLS... AND SOON *HADES* CAN HAVE YOUR *SOUL!*

HOLD, ARGIVE!

WHAT'S *THIS??* SOME *NEW* GOD PLUMMETS DOWN UPON THE BATTLE-FIELD?

SURELY, IT CAN ONLY BE *APOLLO*, BROTHER TO HER WHOM I DID WOUND!

THINK WHAT THOU *WILT*, DIOMEDES! KNOW ONLY THIS:

AENEAS MUST LIVE!

MY SPEAR-- SHATTERED!

BUT, WHERE WOODEN HAFT MAY SPLINTER, MY *SWORD OF BRONZE* WILL--

THOU ART A *DULLARD*, FOR ALL THY STRENGTH, MORTAL...

...NOR WOULD THAT STRENGTH AVAIL THEE A FLEETING *MOMENT* 'GAINST EITHER MINE ARM...OR MINE *HAMMER!*

SHRAK

I'LL *NOT* FIGHT ONE WHO WIELDS THE POWER OF THE *SUN* ITSELF!

THERE ARE OTHER, *HUMAN* FOES UPON WHOM I CAN BETTER VENT MY SPLEEN.

SO BE IT! I CARE NOT... BUT STAY THEE ASIDE FROM *AENEAS!*

NOW, THE ARGIVE WARRIOR HAVING FLED, THOR LEAPS **UPWARD** WITH THE SORELY WOUNDED AENEAS...

...LEAVING MEN TO SING, DOWN THROUGH UNNUMBERED AGES, OF HOW THE GREEK GOD **APOLLO** DID PUT DIOMEDES TO ROUT, THIS DAY OF DAYS.

SOON, WITHIN THE CITY WALLS...

I KNOW NOT HOW YOU BROUGHT HIM HERE SO SPEEDILY, STRANGER, BUT HIS **HIP** WILL NOT HEAL SO QUICKLY.

THEN LET HIM **REST** HERE.

THE BATTLE WILL RAGE AS WELL **WITHOUT** HIM.

N-NO, WAYFARER! IF YOU ARE TRULY A GOD, AS I SUSPECT, **HEAL** ME-- SO I CAN TAKE MY RIGHTFUL PLACE-- ALONGSIDE VALIANT **HECTOR!**

THERE BE LIMITS, MORTAL, 'PON EVEN **MY** POWERS.

STILL, AS THOU ART MY FRIEND, **I'LL** FIGHT THE ARGIVES THIS DAY-- AND THEY SHALL SEE **THEE**, INSTEAD!

AS, ON ETERNAL OLYMPUS...

I BEG THEE, FATHER-- LET ME **RETURN** TO THE FRAY, ERE THE BLOODLETTING ALL BE ENDED!

NAY, ATHENA! 'TIS NOT FOR **IMMORTALS** TO DIRTY THEIR HANDS WITH THE AFFAIRS OF BASE MORTALS.

WE MUST BE-- **BUT HOLD!**

BY THE SIRE I O'ERTHREW-- AND THE OFFSPRING HE THEN SPEWED FORTH!

DO MINE AGE-OLD EYES **DECEIVE** ME?

WOULD HE-- E'EN **HE**-- SO **DARE??**

"HE **WOULD!**"

SO SWIFTLY DOES THOR RETURN TO THE PITCHED COMBAT, THAT NO MAN SEES HIM **DESCEND** INTO THEIR MIDST--

NOR WOULD ANY RECOGNIZE HIS GRIM **WAR-CRY**--

--EVEN IF THEY COULD HEAR IT ABOVE THE **QUAKING OF THE EARTH** WHICH FOLLOWS HARD UPON HIS MYSTIC HAMMER'S BLOW:

FOR AENEAS--

--AND FOR THE GLORY OF ASGAAAARD!!

WHROOM

AND NEARBY, WHERE **HECTOR** HAS BEEN BATTLING ALONE --

AENEAS IS RETURNED-- WITH THE *POWER OF THE GODS!*

THEN-- *TROY MUST TRIUMPH!*

AND, EVEN AT THAT MOMENT, A **SECOND** DEITY ENTERS THE WAR ON THE TROJAN SIDE...

NOW *BEWARE*, ARGIVES!

THE *GOD OF WAR* BE LOOSED AMONG YE!

HAH! THERE'S A GOD-- BUT *NOT* THE ONE I FOUGHT BEFORE!

TOO LATE TO TURN *ASIDE*-- BUT WILL MY SWORD HAVE POWER TO *TOUCH* HIM?

'TIS NOT VAIN *APHRODITE*, WEAKEST OF SPIRITS, THOU DOST FACE *THIS* TIME, DIOMEDES!

BRAVE WORDS, WAR-GOD... WHEN THOU KNOWEST THE ADVANTAGE DOTH LIE WITH *THEE.*

WE'LL *SEE* WHAT HAPPENS--

--WHEN ATHENA DOTH GUIDE THE ARGIVE PRINCE'S HAND!

WHAT--?

AAA

LOUDER THAN 10,000 MEN DOES THE STRICKEN WAR-GOD BELLOW--

AIII

FOR, THOSE WHO CAUSE WAR ARE NOT ALWAYS ITS BRAVEST WARRIORS.

THEN, HE FLEES TO OLYMPUS TO SHOW ZEUS HIS STREAMING ICHOR-WOUNDS...

--WHILE THE NORTH-BORN GOD OF THUNDER, MORE LOATH THAN ARES TO SMITE MERE MORTALS, UNLEASHES THE FORCE OF THE HURRICANE AMID THE INVADING HOST--

SKOOSH

IT CAN-NOT BE PRINCE AENEAS ALONE!

AYE-- OR ELSE HIS BROTHER POSEIDON, BRINGER OF EARTH-QUAKES!

SURELY, IT MUST BE ZEUS HIM-SELF WHO SENDS THIS UNHOLY STORM!

--SCATTERING MEN AND STEEDS AND CHARIOTS BEFORE HIM, LIKE LEAVES IN A WINTER'S WIND!

MEANWHILE, FROM ANOTHER VANTAGE POINT, LOVELY **HELEN** AND THE MIRACULOUSLY RESCUED **PARIS** LOOK ON...

IF AENEAS CONTINUES TO PREVAIL, SURELY HE MUST **BURN** THE INVADERS' SHIPS ERE THIS DAY BE DONE.

AYE! THEN **HE** WILL BE THE MOST REVERED WARRIOR IN TROY...

...INSTEAD OF **HECTOR**, WHO LORDS IT ALWAYS OVER ME!

THE IMMORTALS OF **OLYMPUS**, HOWEVER, HAVE OTHER IDEAS...

VERILY, THIS BARBAROUS GODLING DOTH **PROVOKE** ME BEYOND ALL MEASURE!

SINGLEHANDEDLY HE WOULD **SAVE** THE DOOMED CITY.

AND THOU DOST STAND IDLY BY, **LETTING** HIM DO SO!

WILT THOU NOT **SLAY** HIM FOR HIS EFFRONTERY, MINE HUSBAND?

NAY, FATHER-- SLAY HIM **NOT**, IF E'EN THOU CANST-- FOR, HE BE **WORTHIER** FAR THAN ANY GOD OF OLYMPUS SAVE ONLY THEE THYSELF!

YET, THINKEST THOU NOT HE MUST BE, AT LEAST... *CHASTIZED*?

SINCE WHEN DID YE TWO HARPIES ALLOW ME *TIME OR SPACE* TO THINK?

STILL, 'TIS **SOOTH**: IN RETURN FOR THE PROMISED FUTURE DESTRUCTION OF CITIES DEAR TO YE BOTH, I HAVE VOWED THAT, ERE LONG, TROY **SHALL** FALL.

AND **NO** GOD, OF ANY CLIME OR EON, MAY THUS O'ERTHROW THE **WILL OF ZEUS**!

THUS, MOMENTS LATER, EVEN AS THE TERROR-STRICKEN ARGIVES FLEE HEADLONG BACK TOWARD THEIR **VESSELS**--AND PERHAPS THENCE TO **MAINLAND GREECE** ITSELF--

RUN, AYE! NONE MAY STAND BEFORE *AENEAS, SON OF ANCHISES AND APHRODITE!*

--THE NIGH-CLOUDLESS **SKIES** FIRST ARE ABRUPTLY RENT A-SUNDER-- AND THEN THE **EARTH** ITSELF!

KRAKK

BY ODIN'S BEARD! WHO DARES--?

THAT QUERY RATHER SHOULD BE *MINE*, ASGARDIAN.

HOW DAREST *THOU* INTERFERE IN YONDER WAR, WHEN *ZEUS* HATH FORBIDDEN IT?

NOT E'EN *ALL-FATHER ODIN* HIMSELF TELLS THE GOD OF THUNDER WHERE HE MAY AND MAY NOT TREAD, OLYMPIAN.

NOT TILL *TODAY*, STRIPLING...!

THEN, ZEUS POINTS A LEAGUE-LONG FINGER...

*AND, AMID A BLINDING, DEAFENING FLASH, **BOTH** IMMORTALS VANISH FROM RIVEN PLAIN OF MORTAL BATTLE...*

*...TO BE SEEN, IF AT ALL BY HUMAN EYES BELOW, AS **TWIN GOLDEN FIREBALLS** WHICH SEEM TO STREAK LIKE TWIN METEORS TOWARD THE HEIGHTS OF NEARBY **MOUNT IDA!***

*AND THERE, AMID AN OBSCURING **RAINSTORM** BROUGHT DOWN BY ZEUS...*

IMPRESSIVE, ZEUS! IN SOOTH, THOU ART MINE *ELDER*, AND THUS MORE EXPERIENCED IN *STORM-GODDING* IT!

STILL, THOR BE NO MAN OR GOD'S *PAWN*.

I RESPECT THY MOTIVES *AND* THY POWER, NORTHERNER...

BUT I SAY AGAIN, THOU MUST *CEASE* THY MEDDLING IN MORTAL AFFAIRS!

EVEN AS THINE OFF-SPRING *ATHENA* AND *APHRODITE* AND *ARES*-- AYE, AND THINE OWN WIFE *HERA*-- HAVE DONE, MILORD?

THOU ART *STUBBORN*, E'EN BEYOND MY REMEMBERING.

THOU MAYEST *DENY* MY WORDS, MAYHAP...

BUT NOT FOR LONG SHALT THOU *DEFY* THEM!

PAKKK

KRAKK

*ON THE INSTANT, **FIRE FROM HEAVEN** APPEARS IN THE OUTSTRETCHED HAND OF THE KING OF OLYMPUS...*

...FIRE WHICH, NEXT MOMENT, BATHES THE YOUNG ASGARDIAN IN BLAZING-HOT RADIANCE!

:-ARRRRH--!:

MY THUNDERBOLTS WILL NOT *SLAY* THEE, I KNOW, NOR ARE THEY MEANT TO.

THY DEATH BE INSCRIBED FROM TIME OUT OF MIND, IN THE *BOOK OF RAGNAROK*, AS OPEN TO THEE AS TO ME.

STILL, I CAN MAKE THEE *WISH* FOR THAT TWILIGHT OF NORTHERN GODS, IF THOU DOST CONTINUE TO THWART ME.

WILT THOU VOW TO *LEAVE OFF* THINE INTERFERENCE IN THE WAR 'TWIXT ARGIVE AND TROJAN?

THY KNOWLEDGE BE NOT THE EQUAL OF THY SHEER POWER, LORD ZEÜS... ELSE THOU WOULDST KNOW THE *ANSWER* TO THAT QUESTION, ERE THOU DIDST SPEAK IT.

THOR HIMSELF BE NOT WITHOUT HIS *OWN* SOURCES OF POWER...

...FOREMOST OF WHICH BE *MJOLNIR*, MYSTIC HAMMER FORGED BY TROLLS FOR ALL-FATHER ODIN, IN AGES PAST!

MJOLNIR-- WHICH NONE SAVE *THOR AND ODIN* MAY HALT IN ITS HURTLING PATH!

AND NOW, THOU MAYEST ADD *ZEUS, MASTER OF OLYMPUS,* TO THAT LUSTROUS LISTING!

BY THE MISTS OF FIRE AND ICE!

'TIS BRUITED ABOUT THAT THINE URU HAMMER MUST *RETURN* TO THINE HAND, NO MATTER *WHAT* BEFALLS...

YET, I DO THINK 'TWILL MAKE A WELCOME *TROPHY* FOR MY--

BY KRONOS' BOTTOMLESS MAW! E'EN MINE HAND COULD NOT LONG HOLD IT!

CONSIDER THYSELF UNIQUE, RATHER, THAT THOU COULDST IMPEDE ITS RETURN FOR E'EN AN *INSTANT*-- FOR REASONS I CANNOT YET FATHOM.

NOW, WILT THOU GO THY WAY, AND LET THOR GET HENCE TO THE BATTLE OF HIS *CHOOSING*?

WHAT DOST *THOU* THINK, UPSTART?

THRAKKKK

METHINKS-- *THIS* BATTLE MAY LAST FAR LONGER THAN THAT RAGING *BELOW!*

SO IT SEEMS...

...AS FIRE AND LIGHTNING AND THE RUMBLE OF THUNDER SURROUNDS THE QUAKING MOUNTAINTOP WITH DAZZLING, FEARFUL LIGHT--

...LIGHT WHICH WOULD MAKE THE VERY NIGHT INTO DAY...

*...AND WHICH THUS TURNS THE DAY-THAT-IS INTO SOMETHING WHICH HAS **NO** PROPER NAME!*

IS THIS THE COST, DEAR PARIS, OF OUR *LOVE*-- THAT THE VERY SKIES WAGE WAR WITH THEMSELVES?

IF SO, THEN LET THOSE HEAVENS *CRUMBLE*--

FOR, I'LL *NOT* GIVE YOU UP!

IN TRUTH, IT SEEMS TO THOSE BELOW THAT **ALL THE DEITIES OF OLYMPUS** TAKE PART IN THIS CLASH OF TITANS-- AND SO SHALL BLIND **HOMER**, WHOEVER HE MAY BE, RECORD.

HERE, MILORD! A ***GIFT*** FROM ASGARD'S HEIR TO THEE!

ALL THE SAME, IT IS BUT **TWO** GODS WHICH DO ROCK BOTH HEAVEN AND EARTH THIS DAY:

THE BRASH AND YOUTHFUL **THOR**, GOD OF THUNDER AND SOMETIME PRIDE OF **ODIN THE ALL-WISE**...

...AND **ZEUS**, A MINOR INDO-EUROPEAN SKY-GOD WHO HAS METAMORPHOSED, OVER THE LONG YEARS, INTO THE KING OF THE FIRMAMENT AND THE **LORD OF GODS AND MEN!**

I WANT NEITHER THY GIFTS ***NOR*** THY HUMOR, ARROGANT REBEL...

THUS DO I CONFINE THEM TO ***OBLIVION!***

ZAP

AND THEY **VANISH**--TURNED TO MERE SCATTERED **ATOMS**, A SECRET WHICH MORTALS WILL NOT UNLOCK FOR ANOTHER THREE MILLENNIA.

BUT, IF ZEUS HAD ANY HOPE OF THOR BEING DETERRED...

IF NEITHER MY ***THUNDERBOLTS*** NOR MINE ***HAMMER*** MAY LAY THEE LOW, ELDER GOD...

...I'LL DO THE DEED WITH THE STRENGTH OF MY ***GOOD RIGHT ARM!***

THIS BE A ***GOOD*** ARM, IN TRUTH, AND IT HAD A GOOD ***SIRE.***

STILL, IN ZEUS, IT HATH MET ITS ***EQUAL.***

EQUAL!? ***NAY***--

--ITS BETTER!

RUK RUK

HAH! 'TIS THEE THAT HATH BEEN BROUGHT DOWN TODAY, NOT ALMIGHTY ZEUS!

LET THEE LIE THERE FOR A CENTURY OR TWAIN, THEN...

...AND MAYHAP, 'TWILL TEACH THEE A MUCH-NEEDED--

BY THE COILS OF TYPHON!

CAN IT BE? DOTH THE STRIPLING HURL THE VERY BOULDERS FROM HIM, AS IF THEY WERE BUT PEBBLES FROM THE RIVER SCAMANDER?

HE... DOTH!

NOW... HAVE AT THEE... MOST IN-HOSPITABLE OF GODS...

...AND LET THE BETTER STORM-GOD EMERGE TRI-UMPHANT!

AS THOU ART FOND OF SAYING... SO BE IT!

A SECOND MORE, AND FIERY VEILS WRAP MOUNT IDA ONCE AGAIN...

...SO THAT EVEN THE **IMMORTALS OF OLYMPUS** CANNOT SEE WHAT THERE TRANSPIRES.

NOR DO THEY DARE TAKE PART, FURTHER, IN THE **WAR OF MORTALS** RAGING BELOW, FOR FEAR OF LORD ZEUS' EDICT.

THEN, AS **MADDENED ELECTRONS** WILDLY DANCE ABOUT BOTH EMBATTLED FORMS, THEY SEEM TO MAKE **TIME ITSELF** TO TREAD AT A VARYING PACE PAST THE PEAKS OF MOUNT IDA...

...AS, BELOW BOTH IN CITY AND ON PLAIN, **MONTHS** RACE BY WHILE THOR AND ZEUS ARE WRACKED WITH THE SEARING PAIN OF AN **INSTANT:**

MONTHS IN WHICH, FIRST, ACHILLES' SOULMATE **PATROCLUS** DONS HIS FRIEND'S BRIGHT ARMOR, AND SALLIES FORTH TO LEAD THE ARGIVE HOST.

THINKING HIM ACHILLES HIMSELF, THE TROJANS **GIVE WAY** BEFORE THE GOLDEN-ARMORED FORM...

...TILL SHREWD **HECTOR**, SPYING THE TRICK, TURNS ON RASH PATROCLUS AND **SLAUGHTERS** HIM WITH A SINGLE SPEAR-THRUST!

ACHILLES, THEN, IN NEW-FORGED ARMOR, RETURNS AT LAST TO THE FRAY HE HAD LONG FORSWORN...TO SLAY **HECTOR** HIMSELF IN PITCHED COMBAT.

MEN WILL SAY, LATER, THAT THE GODS INTERFERED, MISLEADING HECTOR AND HELPING ACHILLES... BUT WHAT KNOW MEN, REALLY, OF THE WAYS OF THE GODS?

NOR IS IT, AS THE BARDS OF CLASSICAL GREECE WILL SAY, A GOD WHO GUIDES THE VENGEFUL HAND OF HECTOR'S BROTHER, **PARIS**...

...WHICH DAYS LATER SENDS A **POISONED ARROW** INTO THE EXPOSED HEEL OF THE DREAD **ACHILLES!**

AND SO THE THE LONG **MONTHS** PASS, FOR THESE THINGS HAPPEN NOT ALL OF A **DAY...**

...TILL THE SKILLED ARCHER **PHILOCTETES**, ONCE THE COMRADE OF **HERCULES** AND STILL THE BEARER OF THE DEMI-GOD'S VAUNTED ARROWS, REJOINS THE ARGIVE FORCE, FROM WHERE HE LAY WOUNDED ON THE ISLE OF LEMNOS.

UPON THE FIELD OF BATTLE HE FACES **PARIS**, BOW AGAINST BOW, IN A DUEL OF ARCHERS...

AT ITS END, **PARIS**, SON OF PRIAM AND PRINCE OF TROY, LIES DEAD WITH **THREE ARROWS** PIERCING HIS MORTAL FORM.

THUS DOES HE WHOSE GREED AND YOUTHFUL LUST **CAUSED** THIS AWFUL WAR LIE **DEAD**...FOOD FOR THE VULTURES WHICH CIRCLE ENDLESSLY ABOVE THE SOUNDING PLAIN.

AND ALL THE WHILE, THE WRATHFUL **ZEUS** DOTH RANT AND RAGE AT THE NORTHBORN **GOD OF THUNDER**...

VERILY, NOT ALL THE **TITANS** TOGETHER E'ER **RESISTED** ME SO STRONGLY, IN THE DAYS WHEN THE COSMOS WAS YOUNG--

--NOR ALL THE **GODS OF OLYMPUS**, WHEN THEY WOULD HAVE TOPPLED ME HEADLONG FROM MY THRONE!

MAKE THE VOW, THOR, AND LET THIS COMBAT BE ENDED! WHY FIGHT ON FOR A ***MORTAL'S*** SAKE?

NOT FOR ***AENEAS'*** SAKE DO I FIGHT NOW-- BUT FOR THE ***HONOR OF ASGARD*** ITSELF!

IF THOU CANST DEFEAT THE ***BLOODSON OF ODIN*** THUS, WILT THOU NOT ERE LONG LEAD THINE OWN ***OLYMPIANS*** 'GAINST THE REALM ETERNAL ITSELF?

THEN MIGHT THE IMMORTALS OF OLYMPUS JOIN FORCES WITH THE HATED ***HORDES OF HELA***--

--AND GRIM GREY ***RAGNAROK*** FALL DARKLY O'ER THE LAND OF THE MIDNIGHT SUN, LONG ERE 'TIS ***WRITTEN!***

WHAT??

BE *THAT* THE BROODING CAUSE WHICH LIES AT THE BOTTOM OF THIS MADNESS?

THEN KNOW THEE *THIS*, GOD OF THUNDER...

THINE ALL-FATHER AND I HAVE A ***PACT*** WHICH BE OLDER E'EN THAN THOU CANST KNOW-- A PACT THAT ***NE'ER*** SHALL OLYMPUS AND ASGARD RAISE ARMS, ONE 'GAINST THE OTHER.

THOUGH THE TWAIN MAY HAVE CLASHED IN THE DIM AND DISTANT PAST, THEY'LL NOT DO SO IN THE *FUTURE.*

HERE, SON OF ODIN-- MINE ***HAND*** ON IT, AND MINE ***HEART!***

I KNOW THE GODS OF OLYMPUS DO NOT ***LIE***, WHATE'ER ELSE THEY MAY DO, BUT--

AYE, BY BIFROST'S GLEAM! I ***WILL*** BELIEVE THEE!

I REJOICE THAT THOU DOST...

AND, BY THE ***DEMI-URGE*** THAT SPAWNED ME, I DO VOW THAT MY FELLOW OLYMPIANS SHALL STAY OUT OF THE TROJAN MATTER AS WELL...

...SO LONG AS NEITHER SIDE DOTH VIOLATE ONE OF THEIR ***TEMPLES***, THE ONE CRIME UN-FORGIVABLE.

I CAN ASK NO MORE, MILORD ZEUS.

NOW, I MUST HIE ME BACK TO TROY ONE ***FINAL*** TIME...

...THOUGH ***NOT*** AS A WARRIOR.

THAT VERY NIGHT, ON A SECLUDED RAMPART OF THE LONG-BESIEGED CITY...

I HEARD YOU ***CALL*** ME, NAMELESS ONE-- BUT IT HAS BEEN SO MANY MONTHS...

FOR ***THEE***, MAY-HAP, AENEAS. NOT FOR ME.

I COME TO SAY ***FAREWELL***... YET SOMEHOW, I FEEL THAT, WHATE'ER MAY BE THE FATE OF THIS CITY THOU DOST DEFEND...

...WE TWO SHALL MEET ***AGAIN.***

I HOPE SO-- BUT ***WAIT!*** I'VE SO MANY QUESTIONS...

*BUT, QUESTIONS ARE PRECISELY WHAT THOR DOES **NOT** WISH TO HEAR AT THIS MOMENT...*

FOR HE KNOWS, IN HIS HEART OF HEARTS, THAT THE MOMENT HAS COME TO **DEPART** THIS TIME AND PLACE FOR HIS NATIVE CLIME.

THUS, HE COMES TO EARTH, SECONDS LATER, IN THE VERY **WOODLAND** WHERE HE FIRST ENCOUNTERED PRINCE AENEAS.

HIS EYES ARE SEARCHING EAGERLY FOR THE GAPING **FISSURE** FROM WHICH HE EMERGED MONTHS AGO INTO THIS LEGENDARY PERIOD...

...WHEN SUDDENLY A VOICE FROM BOTH PAST **AND** FUTURE CALLS HIM BACK TO A TROUBLED PRESENT:

SO, DEAR "BROTHER"... WE MEET **AGAIN**, DO WE?

THOU!?

BY THE GOLDEN APPLES OF YOUTH, I DID NIGH **FORGET** THEE, LOKI... NOR DID I **KNOW** THAT THOU HADST WANDERED INTO THE SELFSAME WORLD AS I.

WHERE HAST THOU **BEEN**, THAT I'VE NOT HAPPENED UPON THEE BEFORE NOW?

I OWE THEE **NO** EXPLANATION, THUNDERER.

I DID FORGET MINE OWN **NAME** A WHILE, THAT IS ALL.

AS DID **I**...SO MAYHAP THOU WERT UP TO **NO MISCHIEF** FOR ONCE IN THINE INGLORIOUS LIFE.

STILL, 'TIS NOT LIKE THEE TO **LIE SILENT** FOR SO LONG, NO MATTER WHAT THE CAUSE.

DID I SAY I WAS **IDLE**?

NAY, THERE BE IN TRUTH ONE **SMALL** DETAIL I'VE YET NEGLECTED TO TELL THEE.

PERCHANCE I SHALL TELL YOU OF IT, WHILE WE TWO DO **GAZE** ONE FINAL TIME 'PON THIS EON-LOST LAND.

I BE SUSPICIOUS OF THY MOTIVES, TRICKSTER... BUT I, TOO, WOULD LOOK ONE LAST TIME UPON THE NOBLE PLAIN OF **TROY**.

FOR, THOUGH THAT CITY'S HISTORY BE **UNKNOWN** TO US OF ASGARD, STILL I DO FEEL SOMEHOW IT'S A STORY TO BE **ECHOED** DOWN THROUGH UNTOLD AGES.

SO IT SHALL, THOR...SO IT **SHALL**.

IN FACT, IN MINE OWN SMALL WAY, I HAVE MADE *CERTAIN* OF IT.

UNHOLY DEVIL! ART THOU RESPONSIBLE-- FOR YONDER *NIGHTMARE?!*

LORD ZEUS DID PROMISE ME HIS *OLYMPIANS* WOULD REFRAIN FROM FURTHER ACTS OF WAR-- BUT THOU, VILE *LOKI*--

--DID MAKE *NO* VOW, TO EITHER MAN OR IMMORTAL.

I MERELY GAVE A BIT OF *ADVICE*, THUNDER GOD, TO AN ASTUTE *ARGIVE PRINCE* I DID HAPPEN TO MEET...

...A MAN AFTER MINE OWN HEART, BY NAME *ODYSSEUS.*

"THE GREEKS THEN CONSTRUCTED AN IMMENSE *WOODEN HORSE*, WHICH THEY GAVE OUT WAS INTENDED AS A PROPITIATORY OFFERING TO ATHENA... BUT WAS IN FACT FILLED WITH *ARMED MEN.*

"THE REMAINING GREEKS THEN *SAILED AWAY.*

"IN THE NIGHT, THE HIDDEN MEN DID OPEN THE GATES TO THE *GREEKS.* THE CITY WAS SET ON FIRE... ITS PEOPLE, OVERCOME WITH FEASTING AND SLEEP, PUT TO THE SWORD... AND TROY COMPLETELY *DESTROYED.*"

--PARAPHRASED FROM BULFINCH'S *MYTHOLOGY*, 1855.

WE *CALL* THAT WHICH WE DID JOINTLY CREATE--

--THE *WOODEN HORSE!*

THUS ENDETH THE **SAGA OF TROY.** BUT THE UNTOLD **SAGA OF AENEAS**, AND OF THE TRUE **FOUNDING OF ROME**, SHALL BE TOLD WHEN NEXT WE MEET, A YEAR HENCE.

-- ROY THOMAS.

--Fin--

The Mighty Thor Annual #7 editorial
by Roy Thomas

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ROY THOMAS
EDITOR
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OF ETERNALS, IMMORTALS, AND EPHEMERALS
by Roy Thomas, writer/editor

They said it couldn't— or was it "shouldn't"?— be done.
So naturally, we did it.

Some sixteen years ago now, Stan Lee and Jack Kirby introduced to a breathlessly waiting world (already reeling from the one-two punch of THE FANTASTIC FOUR and THE INCREDIBLE HULK, introduced during the preceding twelve-month) a certain golden-tressed thunder god, altered from Norse mythology into a powerful, awe-inspiring super-hero.

This was THE MIGHTY THOR— star first of JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY, and then of his own Marvel magazine— and it was the start of an era that is still going strong!

Marvel's THOR, of course, was not quite the first attempt to put mythological heroes in general, or even Thor in particular, into comics form. But we'll let our fabulous fans, who are far more knowledgeable on such things than we, argue about who and what came first. The fact remains that THOR *was* the first fully-realized, totally successful incarnation of the Vikings' storm god as a true-blue super-hero, complete with secret identity, weaknesses, and twentieth-century-type problems. As such, he was an instant hit— especially after Jack returned to the mag on a full-time basis by the mid-60's, to team up with Stan for some of the greatest, most epoch-making adventures ever collected between two covers.

The "god-thing," as some readers have astutely called it, really caught on after that. First, the "Tales of Asgard" series was added to the book, initially to recap some of Thor and Loki's youthful exploits— told with a smattering of authentic Norse flavor, but always recasting it in the super-heroic mold, with such changes as were deemed appropriate. Soon afterward, Hercules, Zeus, and the whole Graeco-Roman pantheon was added to the series, again with alterations.

Those of us who were fanatical comics boosters in those days, or just-burgeoning professionals, were as impressed as anybody else. That's why, over the years, such features as WARLOCK (both the Kane/Thomas and Starlin versions) and perhaps even CONAN THE BARBARIAN were added to the Marvel lineup. . . not to mention many another cosmic mind trip in the pages of DR. STRANGE, CAPTAIN MARVEL, IRON MAN, and other mags.

As for Jack himself: When he left Marvel for a time in the early 70's, THE MIGHTY THOR raged on quite successfully, of course, with Stan still at the scripting reins, mostly in tandem with Big John Buscema. Jack himself wrote and drew more than one series at our Distinguished Competition which grew out of his collaboration on THOR— and why not?

Then, when Jack returned to Marvel a couple of years back, he and Stan discussed the kind of material he should do, since he wished to write as well as draw the features he handled. One natural outgrowth of the conversation was— THE ETERNALS, which ran some 19 issues and an Annual during 1976-77. And what a mag it was, too!

This time, instead of using either an already-established pantheon of gods *or* their modernistic successors, Jack preferred to go even further back in time— to merge his own interests with the appeal of the "Chariots of the Gods" fever which had gripped much of the country— to come up with a feature as truly original as anything he had ever done.

If there was any problem, at least as far as integration of THE ETERNALS into the Marvel lineup was concerned, it was a bit *too* original. Though mentioning SHIELD and the Hulk, it seemed somehow not to fit into the established Marvel Universe — and, though there's a determined and occasionally nearly-convincing hard-core of fans who think THE ETERNALS should *not* be fit into the same cosmos as the F.F., Spidey, and company, hardly anybody at 575 Madison Avenue is among 'em.

Thus, when it came time for me to plot my first all-new THOR ANNUAL, I suggested to editor in chief Jim Shooter that that might be the best place to bring Ikaris, Makkari, *et al.* in the aforementioned Marvel Universe. He agreed wholeheartedly— especially since we all wanted to keep the series alive, after it didn't quite manage to gather the requisite number of monthly readers to carry its own title over the long run.

Walt Simonson, one of the bigger ETERNALS fans among the Bullpen itself, volunteered to do the art chores for the issue — ably assisted by Ernie Chan— and I set to work.

Only thing is, I discovered very quickly that there was just *too much* for me to hope to integrate the whole thing in one story, even if I used the entire 35 pages available to me! All I had room to do was to *start* the task, not complete it.

Thus, I decided to make the entire tale more or less an introduction of the Eternals (some of them, anyway— including a new face or two) into the ol' M.U. by presupposing a meeting of Thor with Valkin and the gang (not to mention a few carefully selected Mutates of Deviant extraction) a thousand years and more ago. This also gave me a chance to clear up one or two loose ends of the series, including the reference to Valkin generally as Ikaris' uncle but once or twice as his father.

Hope you liked it— 'cause it's done, and there's no turning back.

So— where do we go from here? Well, as you've probably guessed by now if you've read "And Ever— the Eternals!", we go straight into the pages of the monthly THOR mag itself: Even as the current Ragnarokian storyline winds up, amid the introduction of more new gods and goddesses than you can shake a Bulfinch at, Thor will segue into a modern day confrontation with Ikaris, the Celestials, Sersy, the Olympians— the whole mish-mash, in other words.

This issue's story then is just a warm-up, though a very important one— and though we're proud as Pandora of the box of problems and paradoxes we've unleashed into the omnipresent Marvel Universe, we're aware that we've many another pantheistic pitfall ahead of us. And Roy in particular is thankful for the advice and help of a couple of resident Marvel encylopediasts and continuity freaks, Ralph Macchio and Mark Gruenwald, for their enthusiasm and encouragement on this project.

Meanwhile, we'd like to close by saying it's been a ball working with Jack's cataclysmic creations — and that we sincerely hope he (as well as you) likes the way we've handled the Eternals' induction into the Marvel mainstream. We'd not have done it, except for our desire not to let the Eternals, Deviants, Celestials, etc., languish forever in obscurity, or exist only to furnish an occasional sparring-partner for Spidey or the Thing in a team-up mag. They deserve to be kept together, these Eternals— their unity as carefully guarded as that of Asgard itself—for, as a spawner of cosmic concepts, Jack Kirby has few equals.

Thus, the Kirby Eternals meet the Thomas/Buscema Thor in what we hope will be the beginning of a return to the old Lee/Kirby Thor greatness.

Keep watching and tell us how you think we're doing, huh?

THE HAMMER STRIKES

c/o MARVEL COMICS GROUP
575 Madison Avenue
New York, New York 10022

ROY THOMAS
EDITOR
MARK GRUENWALD
ASSISTANT EDITOR

A FEW OUNCES OF TROY

by Roy Thomas

A few words on THE MAKING OF THE THOR ANNUAL, 1979...

As longtime readers of our regular THOR monthly comic-mag already know, we've been planning for many moons now to start a SECOND magazine about the Asgardian thunder god, concentrating on his adventures in other times, other lands...but for several reasons, not the least of which are my own lack of time to script and edit such a mag and the unavailability of just the right artist, it's not yet gotten off the ground.

This year's THOR ANNUAL represents the closest we've got yet to such a magazine, which we've tentatively christened THE HAMMER OF THOR. (Pretty good, huh? We've got a title. Now all we need is a mag to go with it!)

And, since you faithful-and-long-suffering ones have evinced, in times past, an interest in the story BEHIND our stories, we thought we'd share this one with you, in lieu of a letters page—mainly because we've already printed a letters page on last year's Annual, in the pages of THOR itself). So here goes:

It's not a well-kept secret among my friends and acquaintances that my favorite work of literature is Homer's ILIAD. I was first exposed to it as a child in the form of the famous CLASSICS ILLUSTRATED comicbook edition, with its strong, tasteful art by Alex A. Blum, who did many of the C.I. comics. (In case you're wondering —— no, I didn't forget to name the writer of the magazine. His name wasn't given. This was the case in most of the CLASSICS ILLUSTRATED, perhaps because the publishers wanted to give the impression that no second-rate writer fell between the original author and the adaptation.)

Soon afterward, I read first a young-people's abridgment, as it was called, by A.J. Church, complete with illustrations influenced by Greek urns and temple-carvings. And soon I had worked my way up to Samuel Butler's classic prose translation. At each step of the way I became more fascinated with the story, even though so many of the crucial events of the legendary Trojan War——including its end, with the famous Wooden Horse ——are entirely omitted or at the most only hinted at in Homer's immortal poem.

In college I labored through the translation by Alexander Pope, which I consider definitely NOT one of the great legacies of the eighteenth century. I mean, several hundred pages of rhymed couplets? (With, as I recall dimly, a single place in the entire volume where THREE lines rhymed?) I forced myself to finish, but it was hard sledding——and for a chaser, I went back and read Butler's version again.

Meanwhile, in the 1960's and 1970's, fine new translations by Richmond Lattimore and Robert Fitzgerald came out; I pored lovingly over both. (Interestingly, though, I never got around to reading perhaps the most famous English-language edition, the Lang, Leaf, and Myers edition of some years back. In fact, I only got around to picking up a copy this past year or so in Southern California, of all places.)

Okay. So by this time, the reader's got the idea: I really get off on THE ILIAD. It's my favorite work of literature, with the possible twin exceptions of Joseph Heller's CATCH-22 and William Butler Yeats' short Cuchulain play, "On Baile's Strand."

And, for years, I dreamed of the day when Stan Lee and Marvel Comics would inaugurate a series of classic comics of their own, and I——hopefully in conjunction with Big John Buscema, with whom I've discussed the idea a number of times over the years——would at last be able to do my own comicbook adaptation of THE ILIAD.

Only thing is: When Marvel finally started its classics adaptations a couple of years back, THE ILIAD was somehow assigned to someone else and already written and drawn ere I knew aught of it, to turn a classy-sounding phrase. I won't mention here what I thought of that edition; this is a family magazine. Let's just say that we all make mistakes, and let it go at that.

So, I decided that even putting a northern diety like Thor into the story of the Trojan War wouldn't do any more violence to Homer than had already been done—— and besides, it'd be fun. Thus, I began to mull over in my mind how best to do it, but the pressure of comics and other work kept me from getting to it.

Enter Don and Maggie Thompson, longtime friends and comics fans now turned more or less pro with articles and comics stories in various Marvel mags. They were looking for assignments, and I mentioned to Maggie that I was bogged down and could use some research help on bringing Thor into the Trojan War without changing the details of the actual story in any major way. After all, Homer was a man——so, while what he said about the doings of Achilles and Agamemnon and Hector and all might be sacrosanct, I felt we could take a few more liberties with the actions of the Greek gods who often guided their actions. I mean, even if Homer had been able to see——even if he truly EXISTED, which is not at all certain——he could only have guessed at what Zeus said to Hera, or if it was truly Apollo who turned back the Greek warrior Diomedes at the gates of Troy, Why couldn't it just as easily have been Thor, on a jaunt down from the north, who was merely MISTAKEN for this or that Olympian?

Answer: It could have been! Maggie and Don took the idea, and ran with it. A few weeks later, I received two or three pages of notes which placed the action of the proposed Thor story in a very particular part of THE ILIAD, starting with the Third Book (we'd call it the Third CHAPTER) in which Paris and King Menelaus fight a duel to decide the fate of Troy and beauteous Helen. I rewrote their notes into an eight-page plot which I then sent to John Buscema, who rendered it beautifully amid complaints that there were "too many characters." (Zeus forbid my guessing what John's reaction would have been if I hadn't cut the number of Greek and Trojan heroes utilized down to the bare minimum!)

After being pencilled, "Thunder over Troy" sat around in pencil form for many months, awaiting either of two events: Either (1) I would write it and press Marvel to begin the long-delayed HAMMER OF THOR mag, or (2) I would find myself without an alternative story to use for this year's Annual, and would fall back on the Trojan adventure. Guess which of the two happened?

Not only that, but this becomes one of the relatively few comics stories which has become a Merry Marvel Footnote even before it was published. (See the reference to Thor's battle herein with Zeus in THOR #289, currently either on or just off sale, though actually written some weeks after "Thunder over Troy." I was determined to straighten out, at least in part, the matter of Thor's first three encounters with the gods of Olympus... though more details will be forthcoming in near-future issues of THOR.)

Moreover, this is likewise one of the first times that the subject of the next year's Annual can be announced a full twelve-month in advance!

The Mighty Thor Annual #7 cover original art
by Walter Simonson

Courtesy Walter Simonson

The Mighty Thor Annual #7, page 4 original art
by Walter Simonson & Ernie Chan

...HE KNOWS SUDDENLY THAT HIS STEPS WERE **NOT** REALLY AIMLESS, AFTER ALL!

THUNDER GOD! WHY HAST THOU COME BEFORE **MIMIR,** FIERY GUARDIAN OF THE **WELL OF WISDOM?**

I HAVE TOLD DESPISED **ODIN,** AND NOW I **SAY** IT TO **THEE:**

WITH BALDER'S DEATH, **RAGNAROK** MUST SURELY FOLLOW--WHICH WILL SPELL THE **DOOM OF THE GODS!**

SURELY, THE **END OF ASGARD** SHOULD BE EVENT ENOW TO KEEP THEE AND THY FELLOW GODS **OCCUPIED--FOREVER!**

AYE, MIMIR--AND I SENSE SURELY THAT THOU WILT ***REJOICE*** AT OUR FALL.

YET, TELL ME--***WHY*** DOST THOU SO ***DESPISE*** THE ALL-FATHER?

THOU WERT ***GLAD*** TO GIVE HIM SO ***LITTLE*** KNOWLEDGE--

--AT THE COST OF AN ***EYE!***

THOU KNOWEST THE STORY, MASTER OF STORMS.*

BUT, BECAUSE I ***CANNOT LIE,*** WHENE'ER I DO SPEAK AT ***ALL***--

--I SHALL RECOUNT IT ***AGAIN:***

*AS DO **YOU,** IF YOU READ **THOR #274.**

"IN TIME'S DAWN, ASGARD FOUGHT A WAR WITH THE **VANIR,** A TRIBE OF RIVAL GODS.

"DURING A TRUCE, **HOSTAGES** WERE EXCHANGED.

"I WAS ONE OF THOSE GIVEN BY **ASGARD.**

"YET, I WAS **EXECUTED** BY THE VANIR, FOR NO GOOD REASON--

"--AND MY LIVING, TALKING, **TORTURED HEAD** WAS SENT BACK TO **ODIN.**

Courtesy Walter Simonson

The Mighty Thor Annual #7, page 8 original art
by Walter Simonson & Ernie Chan

MIGHTY THOR ANNUAL
HERE, IN THIS NAMELESS LAND SHALL I -- BY THE GOLDEN APPLES OF IDUN!
FREE ME, BEING FROM THE HEAVENS-- FREE ME--!
THAT VOICE -- CALLING TO ME FROM YONDER CAVE--!
A DOORWAY-- YET SEALED BY A MIGHTY HAND!
STILL, THE DRONING VOICE I HEARD HATH AROUSED MY CURIOSITY--
--AND NO DOORWAY MADE BY MAN OR GODS MAY KEEP OUT THE SCION OF ODIN!
RUNGH!
NOR MAY ANY MENACE THAT MAY LIE WITHIN BE SUCH THAT I CANNOT VANQUISH IT.
"THIS, OF COURSE, OCCURRED IN THE DAYS BEFORE ODIN DID TEACH YOU SUCH SMALL HUMILITY AS YOU NOW POSSESS...
"...MORE'S THE PITY!
FREE ME, WAYFARER-- AND GREAT SHALL BE YOUR REWARD!
BY THE MAW OF THE MIDGARD SERPENT!
SO SPEAKS DROMEDAN, MASTER OF MINDS AND MEN!
10

Courtesy Walter Simonson

The Mighty Thor Annual #7, page 34 original art
by Walter Simonson & Ernie Chan

MIGHTY THOR 1 46

--TO REMEMBER SO LITTLE OF IMPORT, UNTIL MIMIR DID REMIND THEE!

'TIS TRUE! AT LAST--MEMORY'S FLOODGATE DOTH GAPE WIDE!

YET, WHAT MATTER SUCH THINGS TO THOR-- WITH RAGNAROK SO NEAR?

IT ALL HAPPENED-- SO LONG AGO--!

AYE! AND SO, PERHAPS I SHOULD SHOW THEE--

--THIS FINAL IMAGE, OF EARTH TODAY--

--A SCENE OCCURRING AMID THE SOUTH AMERICAN MOUNTAINS MEN CALL THE ANDES--!

NAY! BY ALL MY PEERS-- IT MUST NOT BE!

SAY THAT THOU DOST LIE, MIMIR!

"THOU DOST KNOW I LIE NOT, THUNDERER!

"IN A FLEETING INSTANT, I, WHO KNOW ALL-- BUT REVEAL ONLY THAT WHICH DOTH PLEASE ME-- HAVE SHOWN THEE ARISHEM AND THE DREADED FOURTH HOST OF WHICH VALKIN SPOKE.

"THESE ARE THE CELESTIALS-- AND THEY WALK THE EARTH TODAY, TO JUDGE IT!

"ALL WALK, THAT IS, SAVE ARISHEM-- WHO DOTH STAND UNMOVING UPON TWIN PYLONS.

"YET, LESS THAN HALF A CENTURY FROM NOW, ARISHEM SHALL MOVE-- TO MAKE HIS JUDGMENT UPON THIS EARTH WHERE STELLAR SEEDS WERE SOWED, MILLENNIA AGO.

"AND, IN THAT MOMENT, THE EARTH THOU HAST E'ER LOVED MAY WELL PERISH AT THEIR HANDS!

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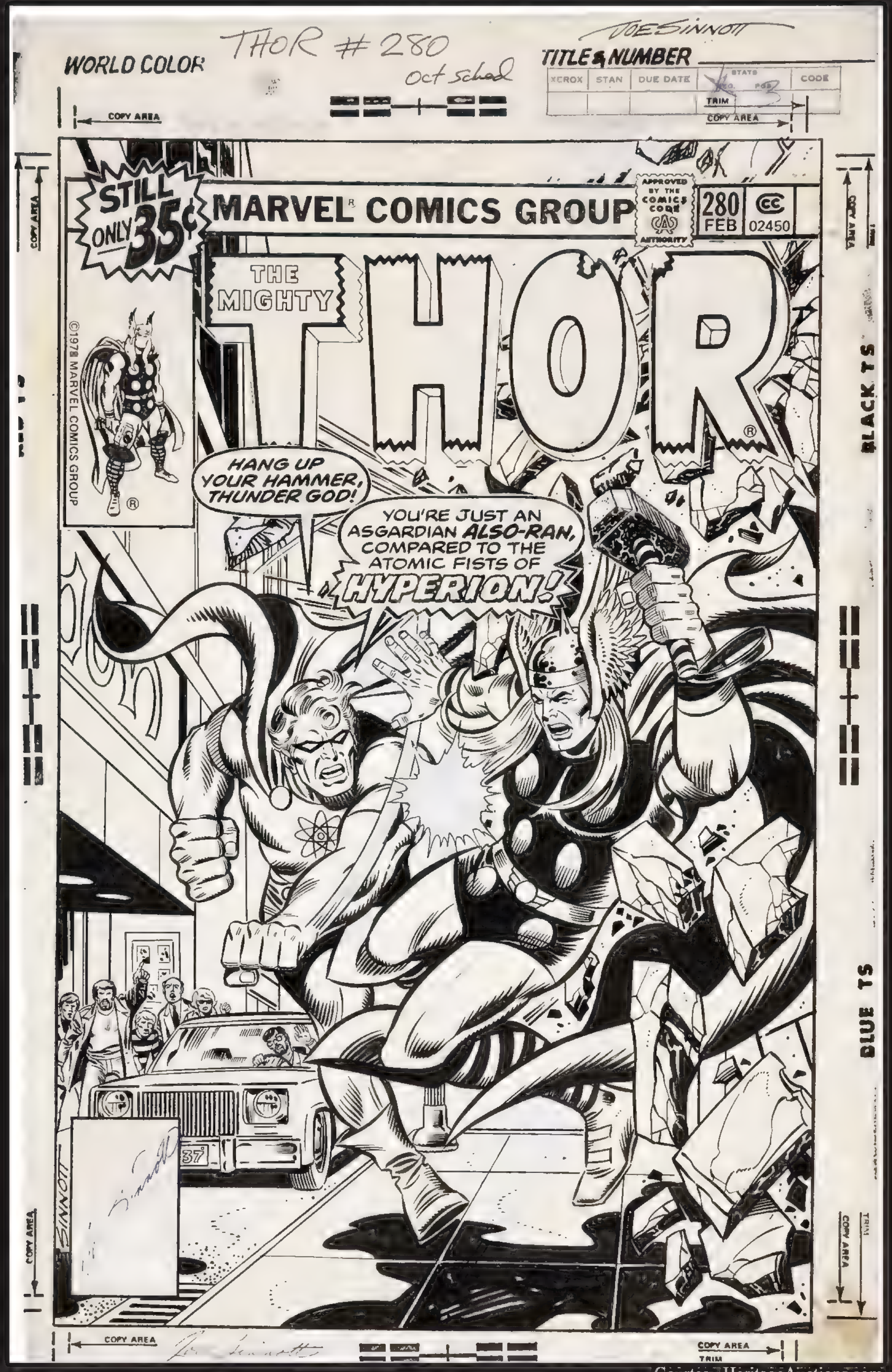
Courtesy Walter Simonson

The Mighty Thor #280 cover original art
by Joe Sinnott



Courtesy HeritageAuctions.com

The Mighty Thor #280, page 4 original art
by Wayne Boring & Tom Palmer

MIGHTY THOR 280 4 6

I'VE *MET* YOU BEFORE, OF COURSE-- BUT I NEVER DREAMED HOW TRULY *POWERFUL* YOU ARE, BECAUSE WE'VE *NEVER FOUGHT* BEFORE.

NE'ER--!? THEN, IF THOU DOST SPEAK *SOOTH*-- THOU ART THE HYPERION OF THE WORLD MY FELLOW AVENGERS DO CALL *OTHER-EARTH*...

...HE WHO BELONGS *NOT* TO THE SQUADRON SINISTER, BUT TO THE *SQUADRON SUPREME!*

THEN *WHEREFORE* IN ODIN'S NAME DIDST THOU *THREATEN* ME WHEN FIRST THOU DIDST--

BECAUSE I HAD TO BE CERTAIN *YOU* WERE WHO YOU SAY *YOU* ARE--

≥UNNNHH!≤

SOK!

--AND NOT SOME *COSTUMED PRETENDER!*

NOW I'M *SURE*, BUT YOU'VE MADE ME GOOD AND *ANGRY*--

--SO I THINK I'LL SHOW YOU WHAT *THIS* HYPERION CAN DO-- *WITHOUT* BENEFIT OF EITHER SHAKESPEARIAN PROSE *OR* SLEDGEHAMMER!

HORN OF HEIMDALL!

I GUESS I *DID* RATHER BAIT YOU, NOW THAT I *THINK* OF IT--

STILL, I CAME HERE TO OFFER MY HAND IN *FRIENDSHIP*-- AND YOU *SCORNED* IT.

THUS, I'LL NOW LEARN THE *SECOND* THING I CAME HERE TO FIND OUT:

NAMELY, WERE YOU REALLY *WORTH* MY TRIP TO THIS WORLD, OR *NOT*??

SO *MIGHTY* IS THE BLOW STRUCK BY THIS HYPERION-- THAT EVEN MINE AWESOME *URU MALLET* BE KNOCKED FROM MINE HAND--

--SOMETHING WHICH HATH *RARELY* HAPPENED, WHETHER MY FOE WERE *MANGOG* OR THE MEREST *MORTAL!*

Courtesy HeritageAuctions.com

The Mighty Thor #284 cover original art
by Dave Cockrum & Bob McLeod

Courtesy HeritageAuctions.com

BIOGRAPHIES

ROY THOMAS

Along with fellow fan Jerry Bails, Roy Thomas developed the first known organized comic fandom in the pages of *Alter Ego*, a self-published fanzine. Leaving his teaching position in 1965, Roy took his deep knowledge of comics characters and their history and moved to New York City, accepting a job under DC Comics editor Mort Weisinger. His stay lasted little over a week before he opted for a position at Marvel, where under Stan Lee, his duties quickly matured from proofreading to more serious work as an editorial assistant and writer.

Titles as disparate as *Modeling With Millie*, *Kid Colt* and *Sgt. Fury* were written under his auspices before he was able to fulfill his desire to write super-hero stories on Iron Man in *Tales of Suspense* #73 and a pair of Dr. Strange stories for *Strange Tales*.

Stan must have liked what he was reading, because after this seeming trial period, Roy "The Boy" (as he was called in credits) was given both *Sgt. Fury* and *The X-Men*. Along with artist Werner Roth, Thomas took the X-Men on adventures around the world and told the characters' pre-X-Men origins. In addition to introducing Banshee, Sunfire and Havok, Thomas' X-Men credits also include his watershed collaboration with artist Neal Adams.

Proving his mettle on *X-Men* led him to *The Avengers*, and it was with this team that Roy really started crafting his legacy. Across 70 consecutive issues of Earth's Mightiest Heroes, he became perhaps the title's definitive writer, introducing characters such as the Vision and penning classic sagas including the "Kree/Skrull War." Before the '60s ended, Thomas chalked up noteworthy runs as writer of *Doctor Strange*, *Sub-Mariner*, *Captain Marvel* and more.

In the '70s, Thomas' influence at Marvel widened to include the first adaptation of Robert E. Howard's *Conan the Barbarian,* a reinvention of Adam Warlock, and a new super-team, The Defenders. By 1972 Roy was selected to succeed Stan Lee as editor in chief. His tenure as EIC lasted for over two years before he returned to his writer/editor role on *Fantastic Four*, *Thor*, *Savage Sword of Conan*, *What If...?* and *The Invaders*.

In 1980, he left the House of Ideas for DC to pursue a lifelong dream by reviving the Justice Society of America in the pages of *All-Star Squadron.* He wrote many more comics for DC and Marvel over the next two decades and is still active today, writing comics, historical studies, adaptations of classic novels and publishing his award-winning *Alter Ego.* Thomas' career contributions were acknowledged with his induction into the Eisner Hall of Fame's 2011 class. He lives in South Carolina with his wife and collaborator, Dann, and an amazing menagerie of animals that must make the neighbors nervous.

JOHN BUSCEMA

Though primarily known for his long tenure as one of Marvel Comics' most prolific pencilers, John Buscema began his celebrated career at the age of 21 with Timely Comics. After Timely closed its in-house Bullpen, Buscema pursued comics work for a time before he left comics altogether for advertising in 1958.

When he returned to comics, however, he did so with a vengeance. Stan Lee recruited him away from advertising and quickly ensconced him into the upper ranks of Marvel artists. Picking up where *Avengers* mainstay Don Heck left off, "Big John" began what would be one of the title's definitive artistic runs. The much-anticipated *Silver Surfer* series was launched with Buscema at the helm, and top-tier books like *Fantastic Four* and *Thor* were entrusted to his care after Jack Kirby left Marvel for DC Comics.

Buscema's bold, muscular artwork commanded the comic-book page with realistic figurework that represented the next evolutionary step in post-Kirby Marvel Comics style. The respect accorded him within Marvel as an artist's artist was of such renown that he literally wrote the book on drawing, composing *How To Draw Comics the Marvel Way* with Stan Lee, the classic "how to" book in comic-book illustration.

He worked from the '70s through the '90s on nearly every title in the Marvel stable, including his personal favorite, *Conan the Barbarian*, with Roy Thomas. He retired in 1996, but returned every now and then to the comics scene until he passed away after a battle with cancer in 2002, the same year he was inducted into the Eisner Hall of Fame.

KEITH POLLARD

One of its most high-profile artists in the late '70s and early '80s, Keith Pollard's tenure at Marvel was notable for his sleek, refined renderings of the company's most iconic characters. He broke in at Marvel in 1974, drawing such characters as Deathlok in *Astonishing Tales*, Shang-Chi in *Master of Kung Fu*, and the super-hero action of *Black Goliath*, *Ms. Marvel*, and Black Panther in *Jungle Action*. After a stint on the black-and-white *Rampaging Hulk* magazine, Pollard was ushered into the starting lineup of creators on three of Marvel's flagship titles.

Starting in 1978, Pollard provided breakdown art on *Fantastic Four* for the legendary Joe Sinnott to finish. Soon after landing

his *FF* gig, he began penciling *The Amazing Spider-Man* and then took the reins from "Big" John Buscema on *Thor*, starting a run that would encompass the epic "Eternals Saga" storyline. All in all, Pollard's hand guided the visuals of these three prime Marvel titles simultaneously, and his tenures on each book are memorable additions to each title's legacy.

In the early '80s, Pollard took on a new stable of heroes at DC, drawing several issues of *Green Lantern* and launching *The Vigilante* with writer Marv Wolfman. He returned to regular series work at Marvel in 1989, once again drawing *Fantastic Four*. By 1995, Pollard retired from comics, although he is currently appearing at conventions and doing commissioned art for his fans.

WAYNE BORING

Wayne Boring came to be known as one of the greatest Superman artists of all time, starting just after the character's debut in *Action Comics* #1 and continuing through the 1960s. His crisp, clean and warmly heroic style informed the character's everyman qualities, while Boring's love for Alex Raymond's work helped emphasize Superman's sci-fi subtexts.

Wayne Boring was born in 1905 in Minnesota. By his twenties, he was enrolled in the Minnesota School of Art and later the Chicago Art Institute. His first job in comics was at a veritable "ground zero" of comic book history: working in the studio of Joe Shuster and Jerry Siegel. His initial job included "ghosting"—providing uncredited pencil artwork on behalf of the credited artist—various genre strips. By 1942, DC went straight to Boring and hired him to draw Superman, a decision that began a solid relationship with the character that lasted well into the '60s. He became a tremendous fan favorite drawing the Man of Steel, particularly during the '50s when the TV series starring George Reeves, *The Adventures of Superman*, was at its most popular.

After being let go by DC Comics in 1967, Boring turned to ghosting comic strips like *Prince Valiant*. A brief tenure at Marvel included a three-issue stint on *Captain Marvel*. Shortly thereafter, Boring retired as a full-time comics artist. He passed away in 1987 with a storied career, recognized by the Eisner Hall of Fame in 2007, and a legacy in the field carried on by his nephew, long-standing Marvel editor Ralph Macchio.

DON GLUT

Comics are just one facet of the interesting pop-culture career of Don Glut. Born in 1944, Glut was making his own amateur movies as early as age 9, with dinosaurs as a frequent subject matter. By the early '60s, he joined with fellow amateur filmmaker (and future comics pro himself) Larry Ivie to film some of the earliest examples of fan-made super hero movies. Many of Glut's efforts featured Marvel super heroes, including a feature in 1969 starring Spider-Man. This youthful enthusiasm led Glut to film school at University of Southern California, though his fannish predilections nearly got him booted from the program. Soured from his experiences at film school, Glut played bass with the LA rock band Penny Arkade, who were produced by Michael Nesmith of the Monkees. His first foray into comics came in 1969, when he began scribing tales for Warren's *Vampirella*. After writing the first three issues of *The Occult Files of Dr. Spektor* and *Dagar the Invincible* for Gold Key, Glut came to Marvel to take over writing *Kull the Destroyer* and the Solomon Kane feature in *Savage Sword of Conan*. In addition to the sword-and-sorcery material, Glut wrote stories in *Captain America*, *The Invaders*, *What If?* and *Thor*. By the late '70s, he had begun writing for scripts for animated series, with credits for several episodes each of *Spider-Man*, *Spider-Man and His Amazing Friends* and *Transformers*. Glut also penned the novelization of *The Empire Strikes Back*. Glut's career in writing and directing in film continues to this day, with a 2018 film, *Tales of Frankenstein*, starring his old comics pal, the late Len Wein.

MARK GRUENWALD

Few can lay claim to the influence that Mark Gruenwald had on Marvel as an editor, writer and artist during the 1980s and '90s. Born in 1953 in Wisconsin, Gruenwald's love of comics manifested in a fanzine titled *Omniverse*, which led to writing articles for the DC-published fanzine *Amazing World of DC Comics*. In 1978, he was hired by Jim Shooter to serve as an assistant editor at Marvel. In addition, Gruenwald also scripted several titles. He was ongoing writer of *Spider-Woman* in 1978-79, he kicked off a long run co-scripting *Marvel Two-In-One* with the "Project Pegasus" arc, and he co-wrote a handful of stories in *What If?* and *Thor*. Early in his career, Gruenwald also penciled a number of titles, including issues of *Questprobe*, *Incredible Hulk* and *Marvel Team-Up*. His major art credit was drawing the 1983 *Hawkeye* miniseries, which he also scripted.

A well-known continuity hound and office jokester, Gruenwald gave T-shirts emblazoned with the catchphrase "Continuity or Bust" to his office peers. His deep love of the Marvel mythos didn't stop with T-shirts. As a writer, he delved deep into Marvel's past with his "Untold Tales of the Marvel Universe" backup stories in *What If?*, as well as the secret origin of the High Evolutionary in the 1989 "Evolutionary War" event. Gruenwald's biggest achievement in grappling with the encyclopedic history of Marvel was his development of *The Official Handbook of the Marvel Universe*, a series compiling the backgrounds of virtually every Marvel character. Eager fans devoured *OHOTMU*, and the series' success led to multiple sequels and updates that continue today.

Gruenwald's biggest accomplishment as a writer came with

Captain America, a title which he wrote for an astonishing 137-issue run from 1985-1995. He also kicked off long runs on *Quasar* and the New Universe title *D.P. 7*. His critically acclaimed magnum opus, *Squadron Supreme*, a 12-issue miniseries, reestablished the alternate-reality Marvel team. When Tom DeFalco was named editor in chief in 1988, Gruenwald became his second-in-command with the title of executive editor. As an editor, he worked closely to mentor young writers, bringing an unforgettable sense of fun to the deadline slog. Tragically, Gruenwald passed away in 1996 due to an unknown heart ailment. In his will, he requested his ashes be mixed with ink used in the first printing of the *Squadron Supreme* trade paperback.

ARVELL JONES

Part of the wave of talented artists from the Detroit area who entered comics in the mid-1970s, Arvell Jones joined contemporaries like Terry Austin, Rich Buckler, Al Milgrom, Tom Orzechowski and Jim Starlin to help put the Motor City on the comic industry map. It was his buddy from the "Detroit Mob," Rich Buckler, who helped Jones break in at Marvel, bringing him under his wing on Black Panther and Deathlok. A three-issue Iron Fist run in *Marvel Premiere* was his first regular penciling gig, but after a short run on *Iron Man* and various other titles, Jones left Marvel for DC. He drew *Legion of Super-Heroes* and *Superman Family*, but it was a long run on Roy Thomas' *All-Star Squadron* for which Jones and his art are best remembered. In the early '90s, Jones joined Dwayne McDuffie's group of creators to form Milestone Comics, a universe of heroes that answered the demand for minority heroes in comics. When not working in comics, Jones has been active in television production.

ALAN KUPPERBERG

Alan Kupperberg's experience with all facets of writing, art, advertising and design helped make him a "jack of all trades" in comics, with credits as a writer, penciler, inker and letterer. He began his career in the early 1970s in DC Comics' production department and Neal Adams and Dick Giordano's Continuity Associates studio. Kupperberg's first art credit was a single-page story in *Young Romance* #183 (June 1972). In 1974, he moved to Atlas/Seaboard where he served as a letterer, colorist, editor and production manager. After Atlas/Seaboard's demise, Kupperberg started working at Marvel, including penciling an adaptation of Robert Bloch's "The Living Dead" in *Vampire Tales* #5. He was a frequent contributor to *Crazy Magazine*, which often featured his scripts for the "Obnoxio the Clown Fun Pages." Clowns seemed to be a preoccupation for Kupperberg, as he would illustrate Frenchy the Evil Clown in *National Lampoon*, and would write, draw and letter the 1983 *Obnoxio vs. the X-Men* one-shot. Kupperberg racked up an impressive amount of fill-in and pinch-hit jobs on Marvel titles like *Captain America*, *Defenders*, *Doctor Strange* and *Avengers*, plus short runs on *Amazing Spider-Man*, *Marvel Two-In-One*, *Thor* and *Spitfire and the Troubleshooters*. He also drew several issues of *What If?* and the four-issue miniseries *Iceman*, and is perhaps best known for long runs on *Invaders* and DC's *Blue Devil*. Kupperberg also served as illustrator of the syndicated comic strips *Hulk*, *Howard the Duck*, and *Little Orphan Annie*. Kupperberg passed away in 2015.

RALPH MACCHIO

Comics seemed to surround Ralph Macchio's life: His uncle was DC art legend Wayne Boring; his Cresskill, New Jersey, hometown doubled as the fictional comic book home of Ant-Man and the Wasp; and one of his youthful pastimes was writing letters to his favorite comic books. However, after graduating with a degree in English Literature, Macchio seemed poised to work for Macray, his family's moving company. An encounter with writer Don McGregor at a comic book convention pulled Macchio into Marvel's orbit. Regular visits to the Marvel office ensued, which in turn led to writing assignments for Marvel's in-house fanzine *F.O.O.M.*, and, by 1976, a position as an assistant editor.

Macchio wrote several titles early in his career, most notably *Thor* and *Marvel Two-In-One*, which he co-scripted with Mark Gruenwald, the latter title including the classic "Project Pegasus" storyline. He also wrote a six-issue *Solomon Kane* limited series and teamed with artist George Pérez for the Black Widow "Web of Intrigue" arc in *Marvel Fanfare*. But unlike many writers who jumped from editorial to freelance writing careers, Macchio decided he preferred the camaraderie of the Bullpen and the creative possibilities of involvement in every aspect of a book's production.

Major highlights of his distinguished editorial career include *Daredevil*—particularly Frank Miller's "Born Again," *The Man Without Fear*, and *Elektra Lives Again*—Walter Simonson's *Thor*, Doug Moench and Bill Sienkiewicz's *Moon Knight*, righting the Spider-Man franchise from the destabilizing "Clone Saga," the launch of the Ultimate Universe, and adaptations of Stephen King's *The Dark Tower* and *The Stand*. Macchio is just as well known for fostering new editors and countless interns, including future editor-in-chief Bob Harras and fan favorite artist Joe Madureira. He also kept a spirit of fun alive and well in the Marvel Bullpen through years of practical jokes. Macchio retired from Marvel in 2011 with an editorial tenure second only to Stan Lee.

WALTER SIMONSON

Walter Simonson mixed the power of Jack Kirby comics with an experimental European influence to produce a visual style that has made him one of his generation's foremost innovators.

After achieving acclaim for DC's "Manhunter" feature in *Detective Comics*, Simonson moved to Marvel's black-and-white magazine line where he illustrated an adaptation of Robert E. Howard's "The Hyborean Age" and penciled the first three issues of *Rampaging Hulk*. Next came a yearlong stint on *Thor* that would be far from his last encounter with the Asgardian hero. Simonson soon made a decisive shift to sci-fi. Adaptations of *Close Encounters of the Third Time* for Marvel and *Alien: The Illustrated Story* in *Heavy Metal* were followed by runs on *Battlestar Galactica*, which featured Simonson's first writing credits, and *Star Wars*. Simonson continued to develop his craft as a writer on Marvel's *Raiders of the Lost Ark* adaptation and *Marvel Graphic Novel* #6: *Star Slammers*, a concept revived from his art school days that he wrote, penciled and inked.

In 1982, Simonson teamed with writer Chris Claremont on the DC/Marvel crossover team-up of the X-Men and New Teen Titans. Shortly thereafter, he began his epochal run scripting and penciling *Thor*, the first issue of which introduced Beta Ray Bill and became one of the most highly acclaimed titles of the period. His collaboration with his wife, Louise, on *X-Factor* included the introduction of Archangel and Apocalypse. Later, the husband and wife team would write the *Havok & Wolverine: Meltdown* prestige miniseries.

In the early '90s, Simonson had a memorable run writing and drawing *Fantastic Four*. Other credits from this era included the *Iron Man: 2020* one-shot and *Avengers*. More recent work has included *Orion* at DC, *Elric: The Making of a Sorceror* with Michael Moorcock and *Avengers* and *Indestructible Hulk* for Marvel.

DON THOMPSON

With his wife, Maggie, Don Thompson was one of the first comic book super-fans to help change the industry in lasting ways. While attending journalism school at Penn State, Thompson pursued extracurricular passions including college radio, folk music and the student science-fiction club. It was while he was an undergrad that he met his future wife, Maggie, at gathering of sci-fi writers and fans. After graduating from college in 1960, Thompson took a job with *The Cleveland Press*, a newspaper he'd work with for the next twenty-plus years. It was during this time that, together with Maggie, Don helped breathe life into a nascent comics fandom that exploded in the '60s with the revival of super hero comics. In 1970, Thompson edited, with fellow longtime fan Dick Lupoff, *All in Color for a Dime*, a seminal analysis of comics' Golden Age with essays by Ron Goulart, Harlan Ellison, Thompson himself and others. In 1973, Thompson and his wife began a long association with the magazine that would become popularly known as *Comics Buyer's Guide*, where they wrote an influential regular column covering the industry; in 1983, the pair would be named the magazine's editors. Though Thompson exemplified the comic-fan ideal, he also got to log a few professional writing entries in the medium, including a story in DC's *House of Mystery* and a co-writing credit with Roy Thomas and Maggie on *Thor*. Don Thompson passed away in 1994 at the age of 58.

MAGGIE THOMPSON

Maggie Thompson, born Margaret Curtis in 1942, established an early and abiding love of comic books when her science-fiction-writing mother, Betsy Curtis, would read comics to her as a toddler. In the late '40s, her parents published a fanzine titled *The Cricket* that covered their interests in pop culture, including comics. Thompson attended her first fan convention in 1955, the World Science Fiction Convention in Cleveland. While studying English at Oberlin College, she published a fanzine called *Comic Art* with her husband Don, which they followed in 1967 with a magazine called *Newfangles*. In their publications, the Thompsons created dialogues with other fans and also created connections with the sometimes-anonymous heroes of their profession. Carl Barks was one such creator whose identity to larger comics fandom was enhanced through coverage and correspondence with the Thompsons and their fanzines. Another topic of their fanzine was an in-depth exploration of the Comics Code and its influence on comics publishing. During the '70s, she wrote a column with Don in *The Buyer's Guide to Comics Fandom*, and in 1983 she and Don took over editorship when the title was bought out by Krause Publications. It was a job she handled solo after the passing of her husband in 1994. Maggie Thompson presided over *Comics Buyer's Guide*, hosting popular columns by industry pros like Peter David, Heidi MacDonald, Fred Hembeck and Mark Evanier, until it ceased publication in 2013. Today, Thompson keeps a regular column at the San Diego Comic-Con's blogroll, The Toucan.

Biographies researched and written by John Rhett Thomas

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THE GOLDEN AGE

As the Great Depression wore on and the specter of war hung over America, a new storytelling medium was born: the comic book. Within their four-color pages, larger-than-life super heroes could make short work of America's foes, giving readers of all ages hope for victory against the real-life enemies that faced the United States. At the forefront of this new medium was Timely Comics, a young company staffed by such legendary creators as Carl Burgos, Bill Everett, Joe Simon, Jack Kirby and Stan Lee. These trailblazing talents birthed a vast array of characters that would give rise to the Marvel Universe!

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THE ATLAS ERA

Seeing super heroes waning, Timely Comics evolved into Atlas Comics and took on a vast new range of genres: science-fiction tales of outer space adventures; realistic war comics; buxom jungle heroines; horror comics that would become the center of a moral panic that rocked the industry; and romance comics for the emerging teen audience. Even the classic costumed heroes of the Golden Age retooled to take on the threat of Communism. From Western gunfighters to crime to horror, the Atlas Era had it all!

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ATLAS ERA TALES OF SUSPENSE VOLS. 1-4
ATLAS ERA VENUS VOL. 1

THE MARVEL AGE

In August 1961, change hit newsstands: *The Fantastic Four* #1 did not feature the squeaky-clean heroes of yesteryear. They were real characters placed in extraordinary circumstances. They lived together, they fought among themselves — and sometimes, they even lost to the bad guys. This was more than a change in attitude: It was the beginning of something entirely different — the beginning of the Marvel Age of Comics!

Thanks to the fertile imaginations of Stan Lee, Jack Kirby, Steve Ditko and others, an unending list of heroes followed the FF with ever-increasing acclaim and popularity: the Amazing Spider-Man, the Mighty Thor, the Incredible Hulk, Daredevil, Iron Man and the X-Men, to name but a few. These were the Marvel heroes, born of conflict and a continuous struggle to balance human lives with superhuman responsibilities.

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